Glad Tidings

January/February 2019

24 Aboriginal Ministries in Canada

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Glad Tidings
January/February 2019
Volume 95, No. 1
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Funded by the Government of Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2019 subscription rate $20.00 plus applicable taxes: $21 for AB, BC, SK; $22.60 for ON, MB; $23 for QC, NB, NF, NS, PEI. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada for our publishing activities.

Editorial

When we think about the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) today, one of the things we do well is reach out to women and children. This has always been a part of who we are and it continues to be. It's an essential ministry because within Canada and around the world, women continue to be discouraged, oppressed, abused, denied of their rights, and put down. According to UNWomen, "One in three women worldwide experience gender-based violence." Just this week, a UN study revealed that domestic violence is the most common killer of women around the world. Women are less likely to receive an education and women are also more likely to live in poverty. Each year, 12 million girls are married before the age of 18. (Girls not Brides.)

The situation can seem overwhelming, but we can still work to improve the world for women.

Begin with talking to your children and grandchildren. Children need to learn how to have respectful relationships. Children need to learn about consent. Children need to learn about self-esteem and self-control. Children, boys and girls, also need to hear the stories of men and women who have accomplished great things. As they look up to the accomplishments of both men and women, they too can look forward to accomplishing great things.

For yourself, consider participating in Thursdays in Black. The Thursdays in Black campaign is an international campaign that raises awareness and advocates for the end of violence against women. You can begin immediately by choosing to wear black on Thursday this week. The campaign uses the colour black as a colour of resistance and resilience. For more resources visit: https://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black.

Find or start a World Day of Prayer service. World Day of Prayer, a ministry of the Women's Interchurch Council of Canada, sees Christians from over 170 countries uniting in prayer for issues that affect women and children. This year, March 1 is set aside as World Day of Prayer and the service is prepared by the women of Slovenia. To get started, go to: https://wicc.org/world-day-of-prayer/how-to-participate/

And finally, continue in the work of WMS, which supports women around the world, such as the Tumekatana conference for women in Africa, the Together We Can project to prevent gender-based violence in Haiti, and a project in Malawi to support theological education for women. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of women in our communities and around the world.

The Spirit of African Church Women:

Tumekutana 2018

by Sarah Kim, Janet Brewer, Cathy Reid, Elza Furzer, Karen Baron

How shall the spirit of African church women be described? They are resilient, persistent, bold, and caring—but above all, they are alive! Alive in their spirit! This was evident at the Tumekutana conference, as they came together to share their faith and their burdens with other African church women. They praised and worshipped God at every moment, at every opportunity, breaking out into prayer and praise, doing all things with God and for God! The faithful and diligent spirit of African church women was evident throughout the Tumekutana conference.

Held on September 15–22, in Johannesburg, South Africa, this was the fourth Tumekutana conference. Tumekutana (a Swahili word meaning, "we have come together") is a gathering of African Presbyterian/Reformed church women from 22 African countries. Previous Tumekutana conferences were held in Kenya (2008), Rwanda (2011), and Ghana (2015). The next Tumekutana will be in Cameroon in 2021. Member countries are: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone,

South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The theme in Ghana (2015) was *From Slavery to Freedom* and it addressed issues of modern-day slavery that still exist for African women. The women were encouraged to strive to be empowered and free in Christ. The theme in South Africa was *Woman You Are the Image of God* based on Genesis 1:27 and at that conference equality (or lack of) that African women face in church and society, self-esteem, and the need for empowerment were addressed. Through keynote speeches, Bible study, and discussions, the women contemplated and discussed what it meant that God created man and woman in God's image. It was emphasized again and again, that "Woman, You ARE the Image of God!"

Three African women speakers and one keynote speaker from the World Council of Reformed Churches addressed the theme in varying ways, from conservative to liberal and from local to global. They each spoke powerfully and passionately, whether it was addressing the issue of inequalities for the African woman, in church, and in society, or talking about biases and stigmas against people who are different, for example, those with HIV/Aids or victims of abuse. One speaker spoke about the inequality that African women face, especially since "Women work harder than men." There is an imbalance of power and women are at the lower

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end, not the upper end of the ladder.

Throughout the conference, a group called the "Listeners" was named. It was made up of a diverse and balanced representation of African women clergy and laity, as well as representatives from among the international partners—namely, Canadian, Scottish, and American. The main task of the Listeners was to observe and hear the issues arising from the speeches and discussions (by the regions). The final objective was to incorporate all this into the Testament (page 10).

In the Testament, various themes emerged. The following are some thematic thoughts:

Equality – The theme based on Genesis 1:27 was studied and the lack of equality for African women in the church as well as in society was addressed. If both men and women were created by God, and both in God's image, why is there a discrepancy in our understanding of the role of men and women in the church and in society? Equality is a justice issue and African churches and society need to work towards achieving this.

Esteem – A closer study on the theme showed the need to build self-esteem, as it was repeatedly said that "Woman you ARE the Image of God." This can be viewed as a statement that women need to have more confidence about themselves and in order to achieve this, they must change their understanding of their self-image and acceptance of oneself as a woman. After all, it is God who created the woman, and in God's image!

Empowerment – Is there anything else we would desire more than to know that we are the image of God! As women of faith, there would be nothing more empowering than to be told this. We are strengthened knowing that God is with us and we are the image of God.

Encouragement – Although not completely impossible, it would be very difficult to achieve any of this alone. Through Tumekutana, the women were encouraged to work together for these common goals. The Testament includes a Call to Action which we are encouraged to work towards. We are encouraged to work through this within our own regions.

Tumekutana leaders and participants are also encouraged by each other beyond the event. They receive updates and prayer requests from other regions throughout the year.

Enactment – Call to Action to all African churches and society, as well as the global community of Reformed churches.

The Testament ends with the Call to Action. This is very important. Without action, all the time and resources put into coming together will be wasted. As the African women prayerfully take action, let us also support them, in prayer and in solidarity. As we do that, let us learn from our African sisters. Their spirit and their faith are truly inspiring. Let us keep them in our prayers, as they strive to be:

- Persistent through challenging and difficult times.
- Bold and resilient in the face of adversity.
- Caring and sharing despite being underprivileged.
- Faithful, seeking God's direction, in confusing and uncertain moments.
- Hopeful, despite the oppression.

Certainly, with these characteristics, they are clearly created in the image of God!

The group that went from the WMS was comprised of Karen Baron, Janet Brewer, Elza Furzer, Cathy Reid, and Sarah Kim. Each person experienced Tumekutana in a positive way, but also differently. Here are some of their reflections about this experience.

Karen Baron

I was impressed with the knowledge and education of the representatives and guest speakers. They are empowered women with so much to give and share with other women.

As an observer, I was enlightened to hear about their common concerns and problems. I think it is a bond shared among women around the world, and these Christian leaders need to take the issues back to their communities.

Women's voices are important in the transformation of social attitudes toward violence of all types. African women struggle both in church and society, but they continue to care for the sick, children, and widows. They need to change the values of society and educate others in their community. They need to make people aware of issues that are often kept quiet behind closed doors.

The need now is to develop the ideas and set goals to accomplish this. Action needs to be taken to move forward for success. A solid executive is needed to develop awareness and support of this within future conferences.

Janet Brewer

This was my second trip to Tumekutana. It was great to see many of the women who had been at the 2015 conference in Ghana and to meet some new women. In fact, this was the fourth Tumekutana and its value is being recognized as something that can lift the spirits of the women attending and connecting them with other women who have similar

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positions and skill sets within their churches in other African countries.

The costs (both personal and financial) of bringing all these women together is huge as they all must cross international boundaries, pay expensive airfare, get visas and permissions, miss work and possibly income, leave families behind with caregivers, and cover costs of living away from home for a week. To many, these costs are enormous, but the reward is priceless!

As visitors, we helped with things in the background, such as meeting packages and name tags, a Prayer Room schedule, an entertainment committee for the Talent Show, a Testament-writing advisory committee, an official photographer, and so on. I had the opportunity to work in the Prayer Room and pray with a number of women who came through the doors as the chance was offered. This is a type of job I have not done before and I was a little uncomfortable at the beginning, but found that the women wanted relief and another person (who was not connected to their problems at home) to listen (and not to judge), hold their hands, and pray with them. I was able to do this over and over. It did become easier each time. The women opened their hearts to me so that we could laugh, cry a little, and pray together. It was a blessing to me and I hope to them, as well.

Our main goal was to listen and give support. I was very glad to be part of this gathering of women.

Elza Furzer

Attending the Tumekutana conference in Johannesburg, South Africa was a wonderful experience. We were hosted by the women of the Uniting Presbyterian Reformed Churches of South Africa, and we lodged at the beautiful and quiet, eMseni Conference Centre, a short drive from Johannesburg. I enjoy re-living my time there through the many photographs we all shared, like walking around the grounds in the

Najla Kassab (left) and Sarah Kim

peaceful settings of the conference centre, which included a mini Sea of Galilee, a replica of the tomb, a chapel, and beautiful garden. I loved the singing, the colourful outfits, and the conversations with all of the women; everyone was very friendly. I learned a lot, listening to the stories of these African women. Their lives are different from our own and yet in some ways they are very much the same: they are mothers, daughters, wives, grandmas just as we are, but not with the privileges we have. We must continue to pray for the women of Africa. I look forward to meeting my new African friends again, hopefully at our Women's Gathering in 2020 in Toronto.

Cathy Reid

After meeting and hearing some of the Tumekutana executive at the last Women's Gathering in Toronto, I was excited to be part of the group from Canada who went to their conference. From the moment the conference started in the eMseni Centre in Johannesburg, we quickly realised we were part of an amazing group of committed women of faith. Although many of them struggle with lack of recognition in their own countries, they were willing to share their stories and their determination to empower women.

Working through seminars, listening to the speakers, and visiting the Apartheid Museum and Nelson Mandela's house, all combined to provide a profound insight into the experience of African women. It was a privilege to meet and hear the Rev. Najla Kassab, first woman President of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The story of her 17 years journey towards ordination was an inspiration for everyone present. As I share this experience with people, I am reminded that the Holy Spirit's presence helped us to bond together in a powerful way. The last evening was a wonderful time of exchanging our gifts and sharing our talents with one another.

African Presbyterian/Reformed Women Leaders Gathering (Tumekutana) 2018 Testament

VENUE: Johannesburg, South Africa
THEME: Woman: You Are the Image of God
SCRIPTURE: "So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God,

he created them; male and
female he created them."
Genesis 1.27 (NLT)

1. We, as Presbyterian/Reformed women leaders in Africa, gathered at the eMseni Missions Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa, on September 15–21, 2018, state as follows:

We give God thanks that God has allowed Tumekutana to grow wider and deeper in connections within and outside our gathering. Our whole existence is founded in God and led by the Holy Spirit.

We recognize that Tumekutana is a God-given platform for us as Presbyterian/Reformed women to strengthen our faith, to fortify our courage, to amplify our voices, and to multiply our efforts.

We acknowledge the inadequate efforts made by our regions in applying prior Tumekutana Testaments.

We grieve that many African women do not recognize that they are created in the image of God, that they have value and power as a beautiful creation of God. Women still struggle with self-esteem, and need empowerment to find freedom, to recognize their God-given strengths, talents, and abilities, be it in the family, the community, the church, society, and continent-wide.

We deplore that massacres and killings in our countries continue because of differences in ethnicity, gender, belief, culture, and politics.

We are appalled that some cultural practices which devalue women and children are condoned by traditional and church leaders to gain influence and are reinforced in our own churches and are encouraged by some African women.

We deplore interpretations of Biblical passages that undermine the potential and value of women in our churches. The Bible unequivocally declares that woman and man are both made equally in the image of God.

We decry that, despite being the majority in the church, women, who are also the image of God, are under-represented in governing bodies and marginalized or ignored in decision-making processes because of the patriarchal system currently in place.

We regret the gross under-representation of women leaders in the social, economic, and political establishment in most African countries.

We are saddened that, in society, our rights continue to be denied regarding employment opportunities, education, health care, safe water and sanitation, food and housing, and the possibility to pursue our dreams and ambitions.

We understand that empowerment is a long and slow process and recognize, that looking forward, we must continue to empower the younger generations of African women to become leaders in politics, in the church, and in Tumekutana.

We believe that we, as women, must work to raise both sons and daughters with knowledge and understanding that God created both males and females in God's image, that both should have equal value, responsibility, authority, participation and opportunity in life, work, and worship.

2. We therefore commit ourselves:

To strengthen our communion in Tumekutana into a vibrant continent-wide network in support of the women we represent and to care for each other.

To ensure greater ownership by participating actively in the regional work of Tumekutana, making it functional and giving it financial sustainability.

To identify ways to collaborate with each other closer to home on issues that will promote the value of women in positions of authority and leadership.

To pray with and for each other, to encourage one another, to share our joys and concerns, to strengthen our information-sharing and communications, to capture our success stories and lift role models.

To encourage a renewed understanding of the Bible to bring out the full sense of God's Word and Will regarding the role of women in the Church and in Society. To grow in our knowledge and understanding of a theology of the image of God derived from the Scriptures.

To encourage women in our communities and churches to unite as a voice for the voiceless and agents of peace to bring justice for the oppressed of the world.

To educate women and girls to be aware that they are fearfully and wonderfully made and to empower them to live into the gifts and abilities God has given them.

To challenge women leaders in the church to engage in dialogue with

traditional and church leaders about the necessity of including women in all areas of leadership and to engage men in the conversation.

To promote the Thursdays in Black Campaign to everyone in the face of rampant gender-based violence. Because women are made in the image of God, God is attacked when women are attacked.

To live out the image of God practically, recognizing that God is Love, by loving and caring for each other in our homes, our communities and being stewards of God's creation.

To turn this and the Testaments from 2007, 2011, and 2015 into a legacy for which we are accountable through evaluation and reporting.

3. We call on:

All Tumekutana women to reclaim our space as partners in the work of God because we are the image of God and:

- to work to break the cycle of violence within our homes, in our churches, and in society.
- to work toward equality and justice for all, particularly for women who are suffering from psychological, verbal, spiritual, physical, and emotional abuse.
- to challenge actively all forms of patriarchal interpretations of Scripture.
- to proactively seek out and take on positions of leadership and to promote our sisters for positions of leadership.
- to continue the process of organizational development, to support the regional gatherings as they take ownership of Tumekutana at the regional levels and create concrete opportunities for joint action so that Tumekutana can have continent-wide recognition.

Ecumenical leaders, African Regional Ecumenical Bodies, the African Communion of Reformed Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches to work with Tumekutana:

- to revisit the Scriptural understanding that we are all created in the image of God and therefore deserving of just and respectful treatment and to emphasize this message to all churches under their care.
- to make space for the voices of women to be heard at all levels of leadership, from the local church level up to the international level.
- to ensure that women have equal representation in positions of leadership within ecumenical structures and to promote ordination and equality of women at local churches.

Countries Represented:

Burkina Faso, Cameroun, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe

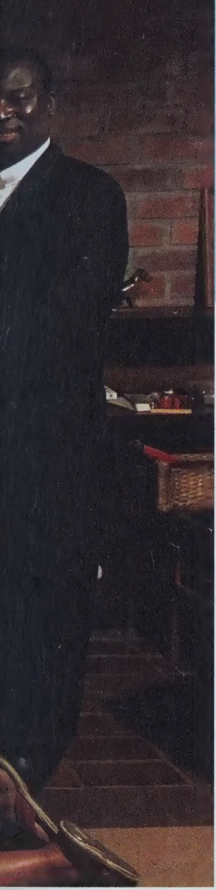
Malawi the "Warm Heart of Africa"

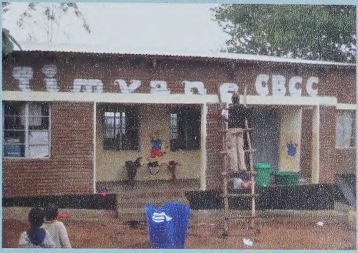
by Cathy Reid

The seeds of my involvement in Malawi were sown when I was a first-year student in Dundee, Scotland. I joined a Medical Missionary Society group and the focus was on work in Malawi. I was deeply moved by what I learned about the plight of Malawian people and hoped that one day I would have the opportunity to experience Malawi for myself.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of welcoming a number of missionaries from Malawi into our home and churches, and of working on projects for Malawi. But ten years ago, when challenged at WMS Council at Crieff Hills to nominate a country for a Mission Awareness Tour, I quickly suggested Malawi and stated how for the past 35 years my heart and prayers had been in Malawi. I felt the need was great and that many challenges awaited us there.

Malawi is among the world's least developed and most densely populated countries. In the rural areas,





the income for a typical family is 500 kwacha or $1 per day. The economy is heavily based on agriculture, with a largely rural population of 18 million people—60% live in rural areas in the south of the country. HIV/AIDS has taken a terrible toll on the population—10% of the current population are living with it and there are 1 million orphans due to this disease. The Malawian government relies heavily on outside aid to meet development needs but in recent years, aid organizations have drastically reduced their financial support due to the mismanagement of funds that poverty can produce.

While on my first visit to Malawi, when we were leaving Chipagala village, we noticed a large stack of bricks with grass growing through them. We were told they had been assembled there three years ago to build an Orphan and Vulnerable Children Centre in the village, but there was no money to buy the other supplies to complete the project. We decided this would be a good project for our church and we hoped to raise the money to send to Malawi within a year. We were thrilled that we were able to send the cheque five months later. The project was completed in the spring of 2011 and we were invited for the official opening of the centre in the Fall of that year. They are thrilled to have the centre which has made such a difference in the community. It is now called the Timvane Community Centre and is being used seven days a week and this generates income to cover some of the operating costs. This is essential so that it can become self sustaining.

I have just returned from my fifth visit to Chipagala and Malawi. The number of projects has expanded and now includes the following - Timvane children's centre/cooking shelter, youth, Mount Moira, eye assessments, Blessings groups, and Mvano guild.

In September, we took funds with us to allow the community to build a cooking shelter so the women will be able to cook in the rainy season. This is essential as many children only eat one meal a day at the centre. These women cook fortified porridge made from maize and sugar for 112 children five days a week.

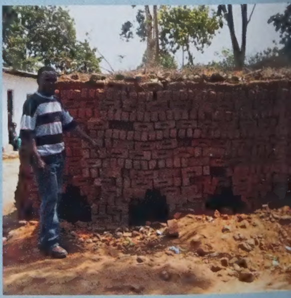
Two years ago, we worked with the session of Mount Moria Church to establish Mount Moria School. It opened two years ago with 23 students and now has an enrolment of 100, including a nursery department which will act as a feeder for Standard 1–4 in the school. It was wonderful to see the children learning Chichewa and English with textbooks and notebooks.

There are many young people in Chipagala and we met with a group of them. They would like to have more access to sports equipment and technology. We were able to provide some equipment and arrange access to a computer we had bought for the church. Many of the young people are exceptionally bright but lack the resources to study at secondary or post-secondary school levels.

A group of ladies in New St James Presbyterian Church also made 160 feminine hygiene kits for us to take to the local Secondary School. The kits consist of reusable pads and shields and underwear all in a lovely cloth bag. Girls usually miss one week out of every four because they cannot afford to buy sanitary protection. We were able to provide all 120 girls at Draper Secondary School with a kit. The head girl spoke for them and said this would make a tremendous difference in their lives. When they were leaving, we received 120 hugs—one from each girl! The remainder of the kits were given to the club for children with disabilities.

This was also a follow-up year for the Eye Assessments which we started in 2016. One man told Gayle (our optician) that the last two years have been the best years of his life because he was able to see properly. She carried out 857 assessments and gave out over 1000 pairs of new glasses which we took with us. It was interesting that one little girl was so upset because she didn't need glasses!

The Blessings Group is a micro loan group made up of 36 women. They meet weekly and each contributes up to 200 kwacha (20 cents), which they then lend to one of the ladies to create an income-generating project. Obviously, the



amount they collect is minimal and it is sometimes difficult for the women to decide what to do with the loan. They asked for, and we provided a treadle sewing machine and money to buy material and supplies. They hope to make school uniforms, bags, and other items. We also discussed a new project with them to consider if it was a good fit for them and there was a lot of excitement about it. The project is the Ecological Farming Demonstration Project. Its aim is to create a one-acre agricultural demonstration site which will be cared for by the Blessings Group. They will be helped by staff from Kusamala Institute of Agriculture and Ecology in Lilongwe who will train them on how to make the most productive use of the land. I am grateful that the Women's Missionary Society has agreed to provide a grant of $3,000 for this project.

The Mvano Guild, which is their equivalent of the WMS, is a vibrant group of women who work hard to visit the sick and collect food for those who are unable to look after themselves. Their meetings are lively and include a Bible study, song, and dance. They welcomed us warmly and made us part of their group during our time with them.

I could go on and on with more examples of what I experienced but I know space is limited. So, what I have learned from this experience? I have been changed forever. I was challenged to be more caring and supportive of my neighbours. I was challenged to come back and to challenge others to get behind a project to build a children's centre in Chipagala village. I was challenged to share my experiences although sometimes it is difficult to put it into words. I was humbled to realize how much more content Malawians are with life. I am daily challenged to examine my materialistic outlook on life.

I hope to go back to Malawi again in a couple of years. I think I left part of me in Malawi. It is rightly called the "warm heart of Africa."

Learning in Malawi

by Priscilla Joung

This past September, I had the opportunity to join the yearly Moderator's trip. The delegation consisted of the Reverend Daniel Cho, Moderator of the 144th General Assembly, his wife Esther Cho, the Reverend Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, and fellow Young Adult, Lauren Fulton.

The time that I spent in Malawi was eye-opening for various reasons. First, this was one of my first introductions to the workings of the national church that I am a part of. Prior to meeting the Rev. Daniel Cho this past May, I had extremely limited knowledge of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PPC) or of my Presbytery, Eastern Han-Ca.

I already knew that with any large group of people, there was going to be hiccups in our journey to work harmoniously. No organization, no church, no entire movement is perfect in terms of working without conflict. But what I found made these partners and initiatives different, and what kept all those involved constant in their cooperation during conflict, was that everyone was rooted in their common desire to see Christ's love shown on earth. I do not think it is a mere coincidence that the PCC is able to continually work with all its many partners in Malawi with this common goal. We visited hospitals, and met youth directors, prison chiefs, and chaplains, though even within Malawi, we did not get to meet all our partners. And this is just one of the many countries where the PCC works.

In Malawi, there was lots of ground travel, lots of time for myself to think, and to read. One of the books I read during that time was Henri Nouwen's In the Name of Jesus. Henri Nouwen essentially states that the issues that are found to be most often debated about in the church, when looked at more deeply, are not issues that will shake the core tenants of our belief. At the root, we can remain congenial with our church because of our foundation in Christ's love. To me this rang true and was reflected in how all the different movements and individuals worked together.

Secondly, I found my learning about the women of Malawi very eye-opening and it affected me personally. At this moment, Malawi is still very much a patriarchal society, where opportunities for women are few. A way for men to gauge good partners is often based upon the woman's housekeeping and child-rearing abilities.

At the many maternal wards we visited, a large number of the mothers were young women, many younger than myself, at around 15 years of age. Approximately 1 in 2 girls are married by the time they are 18 years of age, making Malawi a country with one of the highest child marriage rates in the world (UNICEF, State of The World's Children, 2016). Personal goals and aspirations, if they are outside of being mothers and housewives, must often be given up.

At this moment, Malawi is still very much a patriarchal society, where opportunities for women are few.

It awakened me to the great privilege I have had and continue to have. Yes, I still have the pressures that come along with this society and living situation that I am a part of, but within those expectations, I still can make decisions for my life. Since I am a student currently, the comparison that I drew was in terms of schooling. I was able to choose the school I am attending, choose the major discipline to study, choose to be a part of certain clubs, and then again after the first year, choose to switch pathways from science to women's studies. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified in Malawi, although not fully applied, but perhaps change is coming.

While visiting the young women in the maternity ward, my attention was also drawn to Mphatso Nguluwe, who is currently the Director of the Health Department at Embangweni Mission Hospital. She has experience conducting various projects, such as the Livingstonia Synod Aids Program (LISAP), and the Maternal Child Health Project. As the head of such large projects, she faces challenges head-on with such courage and faith in God's plan. I believe I can speak for the delegation when I say that Mphatso's passion and love for the mission was incredibly encouraging to the hospital's vision, the women she works with, as well as the girls and women she provides care for in the hospital.

The government of Malawi has been pushing for an increased number of women in decision-making roles in both the public and private sectors. Again, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women has been ratified, although not yet fully applied. The change in the social climate of Malawi regarding women is still picking up steam, but individuals such as Mphatso give great hope in the future of this dialogue.

Beyond the

Stereotype

by Lauren Fulton

When people think of Africa, they think of poverty, disease, and danger. These stereotypes are so strong for this continent that sometimes that is all that anyone thinks of. Of course, countries in Africa have these problems, but doesn't every country?

Every country is faced with poverty in some form. Disease and sickness cause pain to people all over the world and the potential for danger is universal. What people don't automatically see when they think of African countries is the love, hope, faith, and passion that is present in the people living there.

While I was in Malawi, I was reading the book of Proverbs. I have always loved this book because it is full of simple lessons to live by and you can almost always find a lesson to help you through a tough time. While I have previously read most of this book in the Bible, reading it in Malawi shed a new light on some verses. These verses were embodied by the people I met while travelling through Malawi.

We started our trip in the Northern regions of Malawi in the Synod of Livingstonia. We visited Embangweni Mission Hospital, which delivers part of the Maternal Child Health Project (MCHP) funded by PWS&D. (This project also received funding through WMS Together We Can!) This hospital, at a glance, was in need of some real 'TLC'. Yet, already we can see that the MCHP was well on its way to making a difference. We saw that a new maternity ward was being constructed and even before this, infant mortality rates had dropped drastically since the start of the program.

It is the staff of Embangweni Mission Hospital that are the heart and soul of this success and with all the success, the staff suffered. In Malawi, the government funds staff salaries, but the funding is not always readily available. Proverbs 15:13 and Proverbs 16:3 struck a note in relation to these amazing staff. In Proverbs, we read, "A cheerful heart brings a smile to your face; a sad heart makes it hard to get through the day." (Proverbs 15:13, MSG) Although the staff has every right to have a sad heart, be discouraged, and even to stop working since they are not always paid, they continue to work harder and harder because they are concerned for the well-being of patients in their care. Proverbs 16:3 says, "Put God in charge of your work, then what you've planned will take place." (MSG) These people of God have a faith so strong and are so passionate about their work that nothing can knock them down. They trust that God will be their foundation and get them through the storms they face.

Further in Proverbs, we read, "Love and truth form a good leader; sound leadership is founded on loving integrity." (Proverbs 20:28, MSG) and "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come." (Proverbs 31:25, NIV) These verses stand out in regards to a leader I met named Mphatso. Her passion, confidence, and successes are extremely inspiring. She works as the Health Director for the Synod of Livingstonia. She is driven and so determined to see change in the facilities that she works in. She cares for the lives of the patients and all of the staff which, in my opinion, is the reason that the staff of Embangweni Mission Hospital are the way that they are. She shows leadership in the most wonderful way—with love and truth. Her strength helps her to pursue what others think are unimaginable.

Overall, the people in Malawi are strong, courageous, caring, and determined. They know that there are a lot of lemons in life: struggles, burdens, and disappointment, but they always find a way to make lemonade. They know that with God and with each other, everything will be the way it is meant to be.

I wish that this could be implemented in Western culture. As a country, we find faults in everything. "The government did this wrong, the church made that poor decision." We fail to see that everything happens for a reason, whether we like it or not. The Malawian outlook on setbacks and decisions that may seem questionable is like that of Jeremiah 29:11, "I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for." As individuals, we find flaws in ourselves constantly. We base our perception of our own worth on society's standard and we forget that we are perfect in the eyes of God. Each of us, with our so-called "flaws" are perfect to God and God's opinion is the only one which matters in the end.

Let's all learn to live like Malawians—passionately, courageously, and faithfully.

EMBANGWENI HOSPITAL
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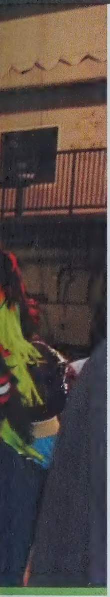
ABORIGINAL MINISTRIES IN CANADA

A special thank you to all who contributed to this study. The Rev. Mary Fontaine provided the liturgy and scriptures for this study, and each ministry provided a short reflection on their ministry. Our next study will focus on additional ministries which support Aboriginal Peoples within Canada. Study #4 and Study #5 will focus on our ministry with the Aboriginal Peoples of Taiwan.

Opening Prayer:

Ahow, Kohta'winaw, wi'ci'hin'an, ki'timak'sinan. E'kiti'maksi'yahk oma ayi'sino'wak ni'wahko'maka'nak. Wi'ci'hinan ka'miyo'teheyak, kweyusk ka totamak, ka'mam'tonetamahk. Sawem'nan anohc, ka'nawe'minan. Wi'ci'hinan kakike ka'nan'askom'tahk. Ki'nan'askom'tin'an. Hiy hiy Kise'manto.

Creator (our Father), help us, have mercy on us. We are poor in spirit, all my human relatives. Help us to have a good heart, to do what is right and to have pure thoughts.



Bless us this day, protect us. Help us to always have thankful hearts.

We honour and praise you. Thank you Great Spirit. ~ William Turner[1]

Amen. (Amen is used to translate Ahow, a Cree greeting or expression, expressing solid agreement or when used before a prayer, it expresses deep humility and honour from the heart.)

Scriptures:

Read:
1 John 3:11–18
1 Corinthians 12:22–16
Malachi 2:10
Acts 10:34–35
Psalm 67:4

What do these passages tell us about love?

What do these passages tell us about God?

What do these passages tell us about God's relationship to all people?

How then should we live?

Ministries:

Cariboo Presbyterian Church: Nazko & Area Dakelh Outreach
Incarnation is the most apt word to describe the mission of the Nazko and Area Dakelh Outreach. Wikipedia tells us that **Incarnation** literally means *embodied in flesh or taking on flesh*. When we think of incarnation, of course we first think of Jesus taking on flesh and walking with the very ones he was a part of creating. We are led back to John 1 where we learn that the Word was with God and the Word was God and that everything that was made was made through him. The most exciting and mysterious part of this passage is in John 1:14, *The*

To learn more, visit: http:/presbyterian.ca/canadian-ministries/native-ministries

Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood. (The Message) God loved us so much as to move into our neighbourhood, to live among us as one of us.

That central part of our theology needs to also drive our understanding of mission, especially among Indigenous peoples. Mission needs to be incarnational, being the flesh and bone presence of Jesus to those we are called to be with. Rather than bring First Nations people to where we are—into our churches and culture and ways of life, which was the approach that spawned the Residential Schools, we have been called to move into the neighbourhood of our Indigenous neighbours and live with them, learn from them, and walk in their moccasins. That is the essential approach to ministry for us in the NADO ministry of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church.

By July 2000, Jon and I had been travelling three hours each way to the Nazko reserve on a weekly basis for six years. It was time to move into the neighbourhood. We have lived ever since in this remote community reaching out with God's love to those in our village and in our reserves. Being the presence of Jesus' love means coming with humility and respect to the Dakelh people and their culture and encouraging them to know Jesus through their traditional expressions. Some of the practical ways this plays out for us is having church in a circle in our living room; singing our praises in the Dakelh language and with chant on the big drum; passing a prayer stick when we pray; and engaging with their traditions around funerals and celebrations.

We seek to learn from the elders and leaders of the community to understand the subtle nuances of their values and culture, which are so different from the mainstream. If we are not aware of our own cultural biases, it becomes impossible for us to truly enter the understanding of another way of living and seeing the world. If Jesus is to be known to an Indigenous person, he comes to them as one of their own, not as a European. Our goal in ministry is to share Jesus from an Indigenous perspective. To quote our vision statement, *We will strive to be Christ-centered, Biblically-based, rooted in prayer, culturally honouring and socially transforming.*

Incarnational ministry does not separate 'church' or 'ministry' from the rest of life. We do not compartmentalize our lives. Ministry happens when we lead our after-school kids' program, teaching the stories of the Bible through our

Indigenous girl and boy puppets Beni and Soozi. It happens when we drive someone to town who was walking down the road. We are the presence of Jesus when we either attend or lead funerals for our young people whom we have lost to suicide, addictions, or violence. A cup of tea with bannock in the home of an elder, or working a deer hide with a neighbour are opportunities for us to affirm the culture while showing the love of Christ. Respect and acceptance can be hard won as the people have experienced the impact of the residential schools, and later the attempts by churches to evangelize them without taking time to build a relationship.

Our willingness to give the last 24 years of our lives to this community has opened doors so that people now welcome us into the struggles and joys of their lives asking

for prayer when they are hurting or afraid and teasing and joking while we sit around the fire.

Mission in Nazko is not about creating programs but building relationships. When people allow us to get deeper into their lives, we bring Jesus with us and they can discover that he has been with them all along. We are truly blessed to be called to 'move into the neighbourhood' of our Dakelh family, and blessed that the Presbyterian Church helps to provide for us to be here.

~ Rev. Shannon Bell

Cedar Tree Ministries

Cedar Tree Ministries is working to respectfully form relationships with the First Nations People across Vancouver Island and find culturally appropriate ways to share the Good News that we have received by the power of the Spirit, the news of our loving God's longing for reconciliation with all people, and the work of Jesus Christ to reconcile us to God and to one another.

The Rev. Joey Cho and his wife Kelly, together with their family, have spent the past 17 years deeply involved in outreach to the Cowichan and other First Nations people in Vancouver Island.

Cedar Tree Ministries' vision and goal is to extend its ministries to First Nations communities across Vancouver Island by restoring and starting churches on the reserves.

CEDAR TREE MINISTRIES
RECONCILIATION, RESTORATION, RENEWAL

In June 2007, Cowichan Grace Church was established in the Cowichan Tribe. Along with Sunday morning worship and Sunday school (where 50 adults and 15-20 children attend regularly), the Cowichan Grace Congregation has been active in many ministries, such as the Scholarship Committee, Helping Hands Ministry, Mini Food Bank, Serving with Community Dinner, and providing a mid-week children's program.

The ministry of hospitality is also practised weekly during their Tuesday Sharing Day Drop-in Centre, where free clothing and household items are made available, along with a meal (recently changed to Mini Food Bank). On Thursdays, the church opens its doors by hosting, Healing Our Spirit, which provides counselling and a meeting. On Fridays, we host a youth meeting for children and youth. During the summer, we hold a Vacation Bible School (VBS) for 50 children.

We have also been active in other areas. In June 2015, we were invited to begin holding worship services on the Malahat Reserve, Mill Bay, BC, south of Duncan. At first we had Sunday services on the beach or within a home. Now, we are holding services in the Treaty Centre.

In September 2016, we began having a Family Service and Kids Bible Club on Tuesdays within a home in Kulleet Bay, which is on the Stz'uminus Frist Nations in Ladysmith, BC.

In October 2017, we began Kids Ministry once a month at the Youth Centre-Soaring Eagle on the Huu-ay-aht First Nation Band in Bamfield, BC.

In July 2018, we had our first VBS at the Pacheedaht First Nation Band in Port Renfrew, BC, and now we have Kids Bible Club at the Yellow House Youth Centre each month.

Cowichan Church

10th ANNIVERSAR
Sunday

Cedar Tree Ministries share God's heart for justice to the First Nations around this area, and recognize the sad legacy left from residential schools and other aspects of First Nations life in Canada. We see great hope and opportunity for the spreading of the gospel and much healing and reconciliation through the work of Cedar Tree Ministries and hope that you do too.

~ Rev. Joey Yongwan Cho, Executive Director

Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry (SNCM)

It is difficult to know what can be done about the growing homeless situation in Saskatoon. During the winter months, the homeless shelters are filled to capacity and they are turning people away into the cold nights. We hear stories about families who live outdoors in subzero weather. Some of them try to keep moving, to keep on walking so that they don't freeze to death.

During the day, these folks come to our missions to take a little nap after they have eaten one of our sandwiches. They sleep while sitting up on their chair in our dining area. One fellow who drops in on a regular basis has been homeless for several years now. He says that it is almost useless to try to help him with handouts of blankets and clothing because other homeless people steal his things, when he leaves them behind in his tent along the river for any length of time. I mean, how cruel can life be when society steals from a homeless man!

However, we do the best that we can with the resources that are provided for us. Indigenous families who grew up in poverty and in abusive situations have lived through some tough times. And they have raised their own children and done their best with what they had. We need to continue to support them in every way we can. At SNCM, we are serving and feeding an average of 150 homeless and street people four times per week, and we are establishing healthy relationships with the people of the inner city. Our goal is to invite these folks to attend worship with us and that is exactly what is happening. On some Wednesdays, we have as many as 30 people attending our mid-week afternoon worship service. Our goal is to bring people to Christ and to be part of his great commitment. And your support has helped us to continue on a road that is leading us to our goals. We also offer an excellent art program, a food program, spiritual counselling and prayer, and a small clothing depot.

Over the past 13 years, I have seen a couple of people turn their lives around. They used to be chronic alcoholics who drank anything and everything that contained alcohol. Now they are completely sober! I like to believe that our kindness and guidance has helped them to change their lifestyles. They still hang around their friends on 20th Street who continue to suffer in their alcoholism, but they just tag along and they take care of their friends. It is good to have sober friends

FEED MY SHEEP

who can watch over you and make sure you make it safely through the day in these sub-zero winter temperatures. God is kind and he is merciful.

Every Indigenous ministry in the PCC will tell you that they are struggling financially. We operate on deficit budgets. We all do very good and necessary work but it is a struggle to stay afloat in these times of poverty and turmoil in the Church and in the world. So, I pray that we will find a way to meet the goals of our budget for next year and that we will always be here for the people. God bless all of you as we move into another season of giving and sharing.

~ Rev. Stewart Folster.

Closing Prayers:

O Great Spirit whose voice I hear in the winds, I come to you as one of your many children. I need your strength and your wisdom. Make me strong not to be superior to my brother, but to be able to fight my greatest enemy: Myself.
~ Chief Dan George

When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice. ~ White Elk

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[1] Translation of prayers prayed by William Turner, my late Mosoom, a Nehiyaw elder from Mistawasis Nehiyawak, Saskatchewan, was provided by Mary Fontaine.)

OPEN OUR HEARTS

by Lucille Marr

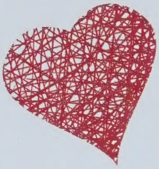
"The Lord opens her heart to listen" *Acts 16:14b*

Lydia was a merchant, a seller of purple cloth, who lived and worked in Philippi, a leading city in the Roman colony of Macedonia. When Paul's missionary travels took him to Philippi, as was his custom, on the Sabbath he sought out the place of prayer. There were no synagogues in Roman colonies, but Paul knew that people often gathered outside the city gates to pray. On this particular Sabbath, he and his companions exited the gate closest to the river; there, they found a group of women who had gathered for prayer. Immediately Paul sat down with them and shared the Gospel.

Lydia listened closely as Paul taught, and God opened her heart. Immediately, she responded to God's call and affirmed her desire to follow Jesus by accepting baptism. She then insisted that Paul and his companions come stay in her home. Later, Paul wrote a letter to the church at Philippi, what some call a love letter. We hear no more of Lydia, but we can ask—was it Lydia that Paul had in mind when he thanked the Philippians for their generous support? (Phil 4:15) Was she one of the unnamed deacons? (Phil:1:1)

As Christian women, we follow in the path of many who, like Lydia, have opened their hearts to listen to God's call in their lives. But sometimes we can feel like we are in the dark, because women's voices, like Lydia's, have been subdued, if not totally lost.

One of my joys is teaching a class on Women in the Christian Tradition. In recent decades, scholars have uncovered stories of many women



AS WE LOOK AHEAD, MAY WE LISTEN WITH OPEN HEARTS FOR GOD'S CALL IN OUR LIVES.

who listened and responded to God's call in their lives, but who had been lost to the historical record. One of these women is Jane Drummond Redpath, whose husband was the sugar baron, John Redpath. As we prepared for Presbyterian College's 150th anniversary celebrations a few years ago, we planned an anniversary book that would bring back voices of people of the past who had played a significant role in the college. We called it *Still Voices Still Heard.* I insisted that we include women's voices and was assigned the task of searching out Jane's story.

I was intrigued to discover Jane's essential part in the founding of a Presbyterian theological school for the city of Montreal. On a wintry January evening in 1864, Jane and John Redpath opened up their home to friends from the city's Côté Street Presbyterian Church where they were members. That evening the dream of a theological school gave birth.

Jane Redpath's name disappeared as the story of Presbyterian College's founding unfolded. It was her husband John who was credited with creating a society whose mission included making theological education accessible to francophones. As I explored the records, I discovered that it was Jane who had taken the leadership in this initiative.

Also hidden in the shadows of history was Jane Redpath's heart for women's education. I was fascinated to realize that she had been the motivating force in moving the institution of McGill College (later McGill University) to open its doors to women in 1871.

A century later in spring 1977, Alison Stewart-Patterson became one of the first women to graduate from Presbyterian College, Montreal. Early in her ministry, she stood behind the pulpit of Montreal's Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul. Taking her text as the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand, she lamented that no-one had counted the women. "Where were the women?" she asked the congregation that morning.

Stories like those of Lydia, and Jane Redpath, are important models for us as we seek to respond to God's call in our lives. Although Jane's story had been long forgotten, when women finally attained the privilege of education at Presbyterian College, Montreal, her significant role in opening higher education for women was key in making it possible for women to be trained for ministry.

Things have changed a great deal since Jane's day, and even Alison Stewart-Patterson's. This year, over half of our students at Presbyterian College are women. Women ranging from their twenties to their sixties have heard God's call. They come from New Brunswick, Montreal and Ontario, the United States, China, Taiwan, Uganda, Cameroon and Argentina.

As we anticipate a new year, may we remember prayerfully the women that follow in the footsteps of Lydia, Alison Stewart-Patterson, and Jane Drummond Redpath, theological students who have opened their hearts to a new thing.

As we anticipate the year ahead of us, what mission is God calling us to? Might it be considering further studies? Or supporting another who feels called? As we look ahead, may we listen with open hearts for God's call in our lives.

Dr. Lucille Marr has been serving Presbyterian College since 2013 as Chaplain and Academic Dean. As Chaplain, she is available to help students with personal and academic concerns, and works with the worship committee in planning weekly worship.

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2018
2019
2020

On the Brink

by Heather Jones

One of my personal holiday traditions is watching The Sound of Music. I don't do this every year, but I do love to watch it. It is a movie that has something for almost everyone. Some people are drawn to the love story. My husband enjoys the historical context. I love the music. One of the early songs comes when a telegram is delivered to the Von Trapp home during dinner, on the first night that Fraulein Maria joined the household. When the butler brings the telegram, Liesl excuses herself from the table and slips out to the gazebo to meet up with the delivery boy who is waiting for her. In keeping with the style of a classic Hollywood musical, the young people converse in song. Rolf sings to Liesl:

You are sixteen going on seventeen
Baby, it's time to think
Better beware, be canny and careful
Baby, you're on the brink.

That image of being 'on the brink' is a powerful one. After our celebrations of Christmas have wound down, we find ourselves on the brink of a new year. We're on the edge. We're moving forward. We're not sure what lies ahead. As much as we might like to turn around, or back away, we can't. There's no going back.

At the end of Deuteronomy, Moses and the people of Israel are on the brink. The last chapters of this

Book contain Moses' farewell speech. He is closing off his time as leader of the Hebrew people. After all the years of wandering, after all the generations of remembering, the people of Israel are on the brink of the Promised Land. The land lies just beyond Mount Nebo. As they gather on the plains of Moab, below the mountain, Moses offers his last words of advice.

The people are facing a new beginning. They are not sure what lies ahead of them and the only thing they are certain of is that their lives are going to change. The leader who has guided them and brought them to this point is leaving them. Moses will not accompany the people into the Promised Land. Their ways of wandering are coming to an end—what will their new lives be like?

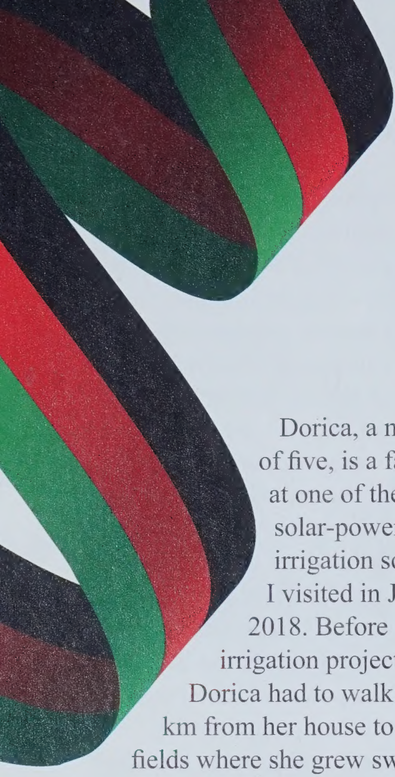
To the Israelites on the brink of reaching the Promised Land, as they were struggling to balance hope and fear, Moses said, "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him: for that means life to you and length of days." (Deuteronomy 30)

Despite all the hardships that the Hebrew people had endured, even through all the difficult years of wandering in the desert, Moses reminds them that God is with them, that God still wishes for them life and length of days. God called them, as God calls us, to choose life. Loving and obeying God, holding fast to God, is life.

As we look back at the year past, at the tragedies and crises that have shown us some of the worst of what people can do to one another, we are reminded that we are standing on the brink of a new year. As terrible as the news has been, as difficult as it has been to feel hopeful, we are reminded that God's promises are given to us. We can be assured. God is with us. God has been with us in the past, and God will go with us in the future. If we look, we will see the evidence of the presence of God in our lives and in our world. If we choose life, we will find the power of life at work in our lives and our communities.

We stand on the brink. We don't turn our backs on our history, we don't forget the pain that has been endured, but we look forward. We remember how God has been with us, and we remember the assurances of faith: God will be with us. So, let us build each other up; let us value and respect each other. When needed, let us defend the rights of all people to be valued and respected. Let us choose life. May our choice bring us life and length of days, lived in the peace and joy of faith.

Heather Jones is a minister in the PCC, currently without charge. She lives in Richmond Hill, ON, and worships at Unionville Presbyterian Community Church.



Hope in the Living Water of Jesus

by Vivian Bertrand

Dorica, a mother of five, is a farmer at one of the solar-powered irrigation schemes I visited in July 2018. Before this irrigation project began, Dorica had to walk 5 km from her house to the fields where she grew sweet potatoes—enough to provide one meal a day for her family. Since she participated in CARD's solar power project, her life has changed in many ways. Her garden is now much closer to home and she now grows many different crops, including onions, lettuce, cabbage, and tomatoes that she sells to vendors or at the market. Through this income, she can help provide for her family—and they now eat three meals a day instead of one. Dorica tells me—with a hint of pride and a smile—that she can afford to send her children to school. School fees (for supplies and uniform) at a public school are approximately 10% per month of an average monthly salary, which adds up when you have several children. Dorica was able to buy a bicycle for her daughter who is in secondary school and was walking 8 km each way. In a country where only 9% of girls in rural areas attend secondary school and 50% of girls marry before the age of 18[1], this is commendable. It is very encouraging to see a project that can do so much: increase food security, nutrition, education, and gender equality. Water is the key.

Dorica's is a story of hope in a country where agriculture accounts for nearly 80% of employment. Almost all agricultural production is rainfed, subsistence farming by smallholder farmers who are dependent on the annual rainy season. Agricultural productivity has been declining in Malawi over the past decade due to several factors, including climate change, soil degradation, and soil loss. Food insecurity is a chronic, pervasive problem. More than half of the population is living below the poverty line, and half of all children are suffering from acute or severe malnutrition.[2]

Churches Action in Relief and

Development—a local partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada—is a leader in solar-powered irrigation in Malawi. In the past five years it has built several schemes to provide water year-round to farmers. In July of 2018, I visited some of CARD's solar irrigation projects in Nsanje, the southernmost district in Malawi, and met some of the beneficiaries of CARD's work.

I met Abesi in the fields of a different irrigation scheme. Her smile lit up her whole face. She exuded peace and wisdom as she spoke about how her farming has improved because of the solar-powered irrigation scheme CARD built. As I asked questions, her face was suddenly overcome with pain. The translator paused. I had asked how many children she had, and he had said "three." Then the translator explained that of Abesi's ten children, seven had died and only three remained. I was stunned. For a moment, the beauty and hope I often see in Malawi was eclipsed. Malawi is among the five poorest countries in the world according to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).[3] Daily we see people who live in extreme poverty.

But then the light seemed to overcome the darkness. Abesi is a successful farmer who has changed her family's life through her hard work at the irrigation scheme. And when I took a picture of her holding onions from her garden, her smile again filled her beautiful face.

Read: Psalm 25:1–5

Reflect

Many Malawians have a very strong Christian faith. They seem to have an unwavering sense of God's goodness, despite the challenges they face. A common refrain in church goes like this:

Minister: "God is good."
The people: "All the time."
Minister: "All the time."
The people: "God is good. And that is His nature. Wow!"

Hope and gratitude flow naturally from this thinking, and many Malawians are hopeful about the future and thankful for what they have.

Malawians find their hope in God. They know that God is good and will be faithful. They do not have hope based on their material reality. Sometimes in the developed world, we reverse things—because we have good things or because our life is good, we put our trust in God.

Many Malawians I have met, like Abesi, have faced tragedy in their lives: they were orphaned, or their nieces or nephews were orphaned, or they lost a sibling or a child. Many of them struggle daily to pay for school fees, medicine, or enough food for their families. Yet their hope is in Christ. Although no one can erase Abesi's pain, Jesus can restore her joy and give her hope for the future.

Discuss

1. Where does your hope come from? Is it based on financial gains, personal accomplishments, your children?
2. Do you know someone who has experienced deep pain or tragedy in their life yet is still able to be hopeful? Where does their hope come from?
3. How does relying on God for hope change our daily activities or actions? Does it affect our gratitude?

Sing

#90 Up from the depths I cry to you
#324 Great is thy faithfulness
#462 All my hope on God is founded

Prayer Focus

Give thanks for The Presbyterian Church in Canada partners in Malawi and especially the work of Churches Action in Relief and Development. Pray for CARD's staff as they work hard to improve lives in one of the poorest countries in the world while facing their own struggles and challenges. Pray for the farmers in Malawi who face increasing pressures due to climate change, soil degradation, and soil loss.

Pray

Loving God, you are good. All the time. We thank you for your goodness and your faithfulness. Thank you for the people of Malawi. Help the Malawian government, international government agencies and organizations, and NGOs to work together to improve the lives of Malawians, especially those who are most vulnerable. We pray that we, like the Malawians, will find our hope in you. Amen.

Vivian Bertrand is working with Churches Action Relief and Development (CARD), a faith-based organization in Malawi that implements humanitarian interventions, development work, and advocacy initiatives. Vivian's assignment focuses on food security and climate change adaptation.

This article is printed in the Stories of Mission. *It includes stories sharing God's hope, love, peace, and justice. It also includes short reflections, discussion questions, prayers, and hymns so that it can be used as a study guide.*

It will be available to order from The Presbyterian Church in Canada in January 2019.

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[1] https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1031&context=monitoring_learning Girls' Primary and Secondary Education in Malawi: Sector Review. Final Report. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2017.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] FAO. FAPDA Country Fact Sheet on Food and Agriculture Policy Trends, Malawi. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). March 2015. http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4491e.pdf

Presbyterial

Forty-five women of the **Huron-Perth** Presbyterial met for their Fall Rally at St. Mary's Presbyterian Church on October 16 with the theme, Where there is Hope…there is Joy.

Presbyterial President Ruth Hart opened the meeting with words of welcome and prayer, followed by the singing of the hymn, Joyful, Joyful, We adore Thee. The Rev. Gwen Ament of St. Mary's Presbyterian Church and Willy Drost, President of the St. Mary's Friendship Auxiliary and Presbyterial Vice-President also welcomed us. The WMS Purpose was then recited.

The Listowel Britton WMS group led morning devotions on the theme of faith, based on Matthew 17:14–21. Our guest speaker, the Rev. Joel Sherbino from Paris Presbyterian Church, then provided an entertaining and thought-provoking talk on the theme of *Hope and Making a Difference*. Rev. Sherbino spent a number of years as a full-time pastor in Malawi and continues to serve as part-time Malawi Liaison with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). In this position he visits Malawi two weeks per year, visiting churches and prisons and connecting with The Presbyterian Church in Canada partners, and two weeks per year visiting Presbyterian groups and congregations in Canada to share with them how God is touching lives in Malawi.

Rev. Sherbino addressed the issue of how to live with a sense of joy in the midst of the circumstances of life, noting that the greatest moments of faith are often born out of the greatest difficulties. Small group discussions identified individuals in the Bible who had overcome challenges, and this was followed by discussion on how obstacles can become opportunities to step out in faith and see what God has planned for our lives.

Business items were then discussed, including a reminder that Huron-Perth Presbytery will host the 2019 WMS Synodical meeting in Goderich on April 23-24. Dancing streamers made by WMS members were presented to Jean Aitcheson of Avonton, who will distribute them to children in the Dominican Republic when she travels there in November as part of a Rotary-sponsored medical mission trip.

Following a delicious lunch prepared by members of St. Mary's WMS, Rev. Sherbino gave a presentation on his ministry with prisoners in Malawi, highlighting the many problems involved and how individuals in Canada can help, through prayer and financial support.

For our Roll Call, representatives from each of the WMS groups present cited a Bible verse on Hope or Joy. Offering was collected and dedicated, and courtesies extended to all those who helped to make the day a success.

The meeting closed with a hymn and prayer.

~Diane Peters

Paris Presbyterial Fall Rally was held in St. Paul's Church, Ingersoll. President Judy MacIntosh welcomed auxiliary members and the Rev. Mark McLennan and his wife, Susan led a lively sing song.

Woodstock Auxiliary members conducted the worship service with the theme, Thank God.

Each auxiliary was asked to report on what their group has been doing. It was evident that the auxiliaries are involved with many fun outings, as one person remarked! Many members of the auxiliaries subscribe to the Glad Tidings and they enjoy the worship services, interesting articles, and the studies.

The Presbyterial executive was interested in preparing soup containers to send to Kenora Fellowship Centre, but the idea wasn't feasible because of the cost of shipping. Instead, we made soup jars that we sold with the proceeds going to the Food Pantry at Kenora Fellowship. Judy MacIntosh and Elaine Stevens spoke about making bean soup jars and members enjoyed filling various sized jars with colourful layers of beans, split peas, and lentils, adding attractive cloth tops and labels. We also donated to the Kenora Fellowship Centre through the Together We Can project and enjoyed sampling three different soups.

Following this, the president conducted a brief business meeting. Shirley Miller closed the meeting in prayer.

~Shirley Miller

Barrie Presbyterial hosted A Day Apart at St. Andrew's, Barrie on October 13. The theme was Butterflies and Bees and Me.

WMS President Janice Terry opened the meeting with prayer. For worship, Betty Grant used a blog of Julia Bettencourt entitled, Superwoman. The Rev. Karen Horst was our leader for the day. Several icebreaker topics were shared with others. Karen showed a video, entitled Creation Calls, reminding us of the vastness of God's creation. Various Bible verses were read to show us that we are beautiful inside and out, and a discussion followed about how as women, we find this hard to accept. What we learn from the metamorphosis of a butterfly is that it takes time and patience for change to occur. With 500 species and some only living for four days, their short life is still meaningful.

After a delicious hot lunch, we discovered what we can learn from bees. Emily Turner, a sustainable beekeeper from Waverly, showed the equipment used and how their bee farm operates. Karen led a short Bible study about bees and honey. From selected Bible verses, we learn about community, co-operation, and God's presence. For crafts, we decorated butterfly cookies and coloured a butterfly to glue on the lid of a small jar with inspiring message about being beautiful inside and out.

The day ended with the Rev. Rick Horst leading us in communion.

Brockville Presbyterial Fall Rally was held on September 22 at Riverview Presbyterian Church in Iroquois, ON with the theme, Bringing Darkness to Light in Palestine. The Rev. Geoff Howard, minister at Riverview Presbyterian Church, and Catherine Blatch welcomed the over 35 attendees.

Claire McPhee and Linda Robinson led the Opening Worship, based on Romans 10:12 and Psalm 133.

The Rev. Dr. Dorcas and the Rev. Noel Gordon, Alan and Dorothy Herbert, as well as Ruth Pollock from Morewood WMS, who have all been on a PCC Mission Trip to Israel and Palestine, were our guest speakers. They described their experiences of touring the Holy Land and Palestine, helping the participants understand the experiences of the Palestinians in Israeli society.

Discussion groups were formed after the morning presentation to review and discuss the concepts presented. Each group provided comments about what they had learned and also what questions they had concerning the presentation.

At lunch, Alan Herbert gave a short presentation about Sabeel, a worldwide ecumenical organization working for justice for the Palestinian people. Sabeel sponsors speaking tours, an information website, witness trips, weekly prayer chain, e-newletters, and other resources about Palestinians in Israel.

In the afternoon session, the discussion began with the focus on Genesis 25 and the promises that God made to both Isaac and Ishmael. The comment was made that the Hebrew Bible focuses on the promise to Abraham's descendants through Isaac, not Ishmael. However, Muslims trace their lineage to Abraham through Ishmael, while Christians trace their lineage to Abraham through Jesus. We are all one big family, although rather dysfunctional.

The speakers then took the attendees through the challenging and difficult relationships between Christians and Jews throughout history, resulting in ongoing persecution of Jews, culminating in the horrors of the Holocaust. Thankfully, the Church has taken steps to move away from this toxic relationship with Jews. Differences in translation of the New Testament, together with much scholarly research and writing, give modern readers alternative perspectives and understandings and questioning of old assumptions and perceptions.

The attendees then gathered into small groups to discuss what they could do to advocate for justice for the Palestinian people, while acknowledging the rights of the Jewish people to safety and prosperity in the Middle East. Some of the suggestions included:

- Praying for the peace of Jerusalem and ALL her children.
- Join study tours sponsored by the PCC and its partners (KAIROS).
- Refuse to invest in, and boycott products made by companies who invest in the State of Israel.
- Participate in and support the EAPPI program (Ecumenical Accompaniment Program for Palestinians in Israel). The EAPPI program sends volunteers to Israel for three months and act as observers when Palestinians interact with the Israeli authorities.
- Be aware of the actions of our own Canadian government and the stances it takes with Israel/Palestine.
- Learn more and work to inform people on what is happening with the Palestinians and what they might be able to do to influence positions taken by governments and the PCC.

Rosemary Rutley closed the

meeting by thanking the speakers and leading a closing prayer. All the attendees went away from the day with a much more informed understanding of the situation in Israel/ Palestine, and what we as Christians might be able to do to help bring justice for all in the region.

Sincere thanks to Riverview Presbyterian Church for their hospitality and the wonderful luncheon!

~Marianne Emig Carr

Local

Reflection on Grandmother's Tea

In 2017, the Women's Missionary Auxiliary program at Paris Presbyterian Church participated in activities related to the theme: Discover Truth, Seek Reconciliation—Aid Healing.

Some highlights included a visit to the display about First Nation's women at the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford; the KAIROS Blanket Exercise with the Paris Presbyterian youth group; and a special evening with the Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin and other guests from Winnipeg Inner-City Missions (WICM) who led a smudging ceremony and Sharing Circles with the members of the congregation.

The auxiliary president, Shirley Miller, and secretary, Shirley Copeland continue in the healing process by attending Grandmothers' Teas hosted by Nations Uniting, an outreach ministry of The United Church of Canada in Ohsweken, ON. The Grandmothers' Teas are times of sharing and building bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women. Meetings begin with a bountiful potluck lunch. Following lunch, a leader will explain the topic that everyone is invited to speak about. As we go around the circle, only the person holding a special stone may speak. As each participant shares, it is obvious that our thoughts and experiences are very similar. We are certainly more alike than different, regardless of our culture or heritage.

There is such a tremendous need for dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and we appreciate the opportunity to learn about the life of members of Six Nations both on and off the Reserve through these gatherings.

Circulation Update:

Thanks for all your patience through the subscription process and the extra challenge caused by postal delays. Please check in with new subscribers to see that they have received their *Glad Tidings*. If there are any problems, please email Gladtidings@presbyterian.ca.

Preserving the Historical Connection

by Priscilla Anderson

Few Canadian Presbyterians seem to be aware of Vision Fellowship, a Korean museum in Toronto, whose pictures on the wall and memorabilia depict the contribution which Canadian missionaries made in Korea, beginning in 1988.

Vision Fellowship is situated at 2-26th Street (near Lakeshore Road and west of Kipling Avenue) and visitors are welcome, preferably by appointment. The Museum was the "vision" of a Korean elder, Sun Soo Choi, who felt that the stories of the lives of the early missionaries to Korea should be preserved and told to future generations. The search began for pictures and historical facts of Canadians who felt called to bring the story of Christ's love to a people far from Canadian shores. Through Elder Choi's generosity, the present location was purchased in 2005. Also, due to the diligence of Elder Choi, Hwan Young Hwang, Curator of the Museum, and David (Hang Soo) Yi, General Manager, the "vision" became a reality and the Exhibition Hall of Canadian Missionaries to Korea was opened on May 14, 2011. It contains an exemplary display of photographs and information concerning the lives of the first missionaries and those who followed.

After reading *Kimchee and Maple Leaves Under the Rising Sun and My Dear Redeemer's Praise*, by Robert K. Anderson, the three "visionaries" realized the importance of continuing the story with pictures and memorabilia regarding the 34 missionaries who served with the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) from 1927, when The Presbyterian Church in Canada appointed the Rev. Luther Young and his wife, Miriam, with the purpose of gathering together scattered congregations and informal worshiping groups which resulted in the formation of the KCCJ.

The research took Elder Whang to Vancouver where Clarabeth McIntosh

Remembering

Gertie Woodrow
St. Andrew's
Beeton ON

Lois Carroll
Sarah McAlpine
Argyle Presbyterian Church
Crinan ON

Clara Hamilton
Joyce Thorne
Arthur Circle WMS
Knox Presbyterian Church
Goderich, ON

Evelyn Raynard
Ruth Robinson
Britton WMS, Knox
Listowel ON

Margaret Blackwell
Ann Hardy
New St. James
London ON

Susan Chong
Donna Stevenson
St. Andrews
Presbyterian Women
Sarnia ON

Kathleen(Kae) Agnes
Tolmie Evening Auxiliary
St. Andrew's
Southampton ON

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and the Rev. Glen and the Rev. Joyce Davis reside, and to the General Affairs office of the KCCJ in Tokyo, where records displayed in two separate rooms revealed information and pictures of other missionaries.

On September 22, 2018, the Japan section of Vision Fellowship was opened. Special guests at the opening, which was a Service of Worship and Thanksgiving, included the Rev. B.H. Kim, Secretary of the KCCJ, who brought greetings; David Mcintosh, who is an appointee of International Ministries of the PCC, working in Tokyo, on behalf of human rights; the Rev. Glynis Williams, Associate Secretary for International Ministries; and Moonsun Choi, from the Korean Cultural Center in Ottawa.

Special music was provided by a group of Korean women, singing hymns and playing on Korean-stringed instruments, led by a young lady who played a Korean style drum. Rev. Robert Anderson brought the message, stressing that the only motivation for any Christian to leave home and family to serve Christ, is the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:18ff: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of every nation..... and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

Of course, the event ended with a Korean feast and an opportunity was provided for the guests to view the displays.

April 28, 2019

Theme:
No Doubt!

by Rev. Dr. Lynda Reid

Scripture:
John 20: 19–31

Mission Awareness Sunday

Resource is Available

The worship resource for Mission Awareness Sunday will be emailed out in late January. The material can be downloaded from www.wmspcc.ca/mission-awareness-sunday.

For a paper copy email amckeown@presbyterian.ca.

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Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

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24 Aboriginal Ministries in Canada

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Glad Tidings
March/April 2019
Volume 95, No. 2
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2019 subscription rate $20.00 plus applicable taxes: $21 for AB, BC, SK; $22.60 for ON, MB; $23 for QC, NB, NF, NS, PEI. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

Funded by the Government of Canada | Canada

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada for our publishing activities.

Editorial

This month, I will be attending our first Regional Presbyterian Women's Gathering in Surrey BC. We are excited to be joining with women, some from as far away as Montreal, as we join together to pray, praise, learn, and celebrate.

Women give so much. We are caregivers, managers, and providers. We often provide for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of others. We pour ourselves into our friends, our families, and our vocations. This is why it is important for us to take time in our life for our own renewal. This is one of the great reasons that women choose to attend these gatherings.

Whether you are attending the gathering or not, I encourage you to take some time for yourself this month as we prepare for Easter. Find a place to gather with other women to share together. Share some of your joy and sorrows. Be honest. Take time together in prayer. Of course, for many of you, your WMS meetings provide that place of gathering, renewal, and support.

Find some time to learn this month. Read a new book by a Christian author. Mary Jo Leddy, one of the speakers at the gathering has just released her new book, *Why are we Here: A Meditation on Canada.* It will challenge you to think more deeply about our relationship with our Indigenous Peoples and immigrants, and about how we care for the environment.

Finally, get out and enjoy the weather as it slowly changes from Winter to Spring. You might not be able to take off your shoes and walk barefoot quite yet, as Fiona Van Wissen suggests in her article, Take Off Your Shoes, but at least you might be able to turn your face to the warmth of the sunshine and remember that we can walk on holy ground with our God. And while you are out, look for signs of new life as flowers begin to grow, trees bud, and birds chirp. As you do, remember this verse that Katherine Allen includes her reflection:

> Song of Songs 2:11–13: "The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance."

The *Joy* of *New Life*

by Heather Paton

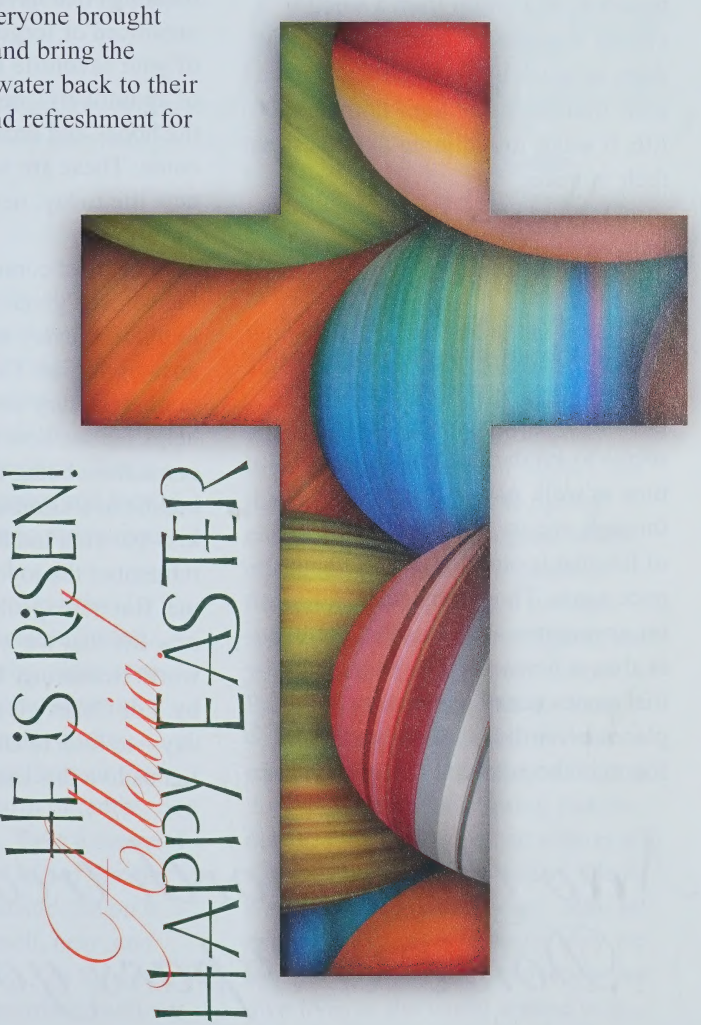
New life is what the season of Easter is all about.

The world looks new through the eyes of my one-year-old daughter. Each time she hears a train go by, she gets excited. Each time she sees a bird in the sky, she smiles. Each time she climbs the stairs, she claps her hands with glee. So many new things are happening that give her joy; it is amazing to see. My first year as a parent has given me many new things to learn too. Mostly, it has filled me with overwhelming joy at all that is growing and alive in my little one. Each day seems to have something new in it as she learns simple things like where her tummy is or how to make a new funny face. Even though she's no longer a newborn, it feels like I experience new life through her all the time and it fills us with great joy.

New life is what the season of Easter is all about. We read the disciples' baffling accounts of witnessing the joy of new life, of being filled with fear and joy at Christ's resurrection. During the season of Easter, we celebrate this core of our faith together. Jesus is alive! We have new life in him! This new life is a gift that is not always as obvious as a new baby or a resurrected Saviour. It can take some paying attention to see the new life that is all around us.

Although I am a first-time parent, I recall witnessing the joy of new life at other times in my life too. I think of long hot days in Malawi volunteering with The Presbyterian Church in Canada when the water had been cut off in our little housing compound. We had been rationing what we had left for a week or so, which meant no daily showers, and the dishes were piling up. Finally, a truck with a water tank arrived, and everyone brought their buckets to fill and bring the desperately needed water back to their homes. The relief and refreshment for everyone in our little community were profound. The adults were splashing the cool water from their buckets on their hot faces before hoisting them to their heads for transport. The kids were joyfully dancing in the puddles that were left behind. Everyone was smiling and grateful. It felt like life had been restored after a long drought. In Malawi, they have a saying, 'Madzi ndi moyo' which means 'water is life'.

I remember the teens from my two-point charge that went to Canada Youth finding new life in community. While they had attended the monthly youth group, this was the most faith-intensive/-focused/-filled thing


HE IS RISEN!
Alleluia!
HAPPY EASTER

they had ever experienced. Their joy overflowed as they told stories of great crowds singing together in worship, of bedtime check-ins that were filled with laughter, and of small group discussions that ignited their faith. Sharing in this experience together, as a group from a small church in a small community brought them so much closer together. It gave their friendship and their faith new life. It was a joyful thing to witness as their minister.

Closer to home, I think of how the blossoms and sprouts of springtime are signs of new life that yearly bring us joy. Especially after a long Winter, the tiny buds and splashes of colour mean warmer days are ahead, good things are to come. This growth seems to symbolize the passage of time as well. As the seasons cycle through, we are reminded of the gift of life that is ours for experiencing once again. Though the years go on, springtime shows us that there is always newness, always growth that comes out of the wintery, cold places in our lives. New life can be found in the potential for forgiveness and letting go. Relationships with others and ourselves can be restored. New life can be found in the new opportunities out there for us to take—new things to try, old hobbies to improve, ways to share our gifts. New life can come in to receive the blessings that have previously gone unnoticed or forgotten, like the taste of your favourite food or the presence of an unlikely/constant friend. Or the hopes and dreams for what is to come. These are ways we experience new life today, new life that brings us joy.

The most common piece of advice I have been given as a new parent is to treasure every moment because it goes by so fast. I'm grateful for that reminder every time I hear it as it helps me see how far my daughter has come from being that wiggly newborn bundle to a climbing, clapping, kiss-blowing toddler. It helps me remember the joy her life has brought me. But perhaps this advice is for all new life that we witness. New life is worth treasuring. Don't let it pass you by. For Christ gives us new life each day—to live, to embrace, to celebrate. Let us live this life with joy.

New life is worth treasuring.
Don't let it pass you by.

Spring

Just as there are seasons in the world around us, so there are in our interior life, We cannot expect it to be otherwise.
~Teresa of Avila

by Colleen Wood

I love being outside—it is where I have had my strongest encounters with God. So, with Spring, I am looking forward to being outside more! We can't all trek to our closest conservation areas, but I challenge you to think about Spring and how this time of renewal can renew your relationship with God.

Each morning, as you arise, I encourage you to visualize Spring. Take a moment in quiet, close your eyes, and visualize some signs of Spring. Think of your favourite Spring flowers poking through the earth. Consider the birth of lambs. See the buds on the trees. Take a moment to thank God for new life of Spring.

If you can, get outside. Sit on a park bench as you smell, hear, and see the signs of Spring. Go for a stroll through your neighbourhood and see what has changed since you were last out. Open your patio doors and head out to survey the neighbourhood. Thank God for the changes of Spring.

Finally, in your own church, where do you see new life? Are there new babies in your midst? Has the church received some Spring cleaning? Have the liturgical cloths changed? Are there new plants or flowers displaced? If not, perhaps see if you can bring some Spring into your church. Pray for your church. Pray that those who enter its doors will be changed. Pray that just as nature grows, our churches will grow.

Finally, pray this Spring that the new growth that we see in nature, will also be experienced within us. May we come alive in new ways. May we experience renewed energy. May we look to the living Christ to renew our own lives as the world around us is renewed.

Take Off Your Shoes

Spring is Here!

On Climbing Trees, Walking Labyrinths, and Praying Barefoot

by Fiona van Wissen

My eight-year-old nephew loves to climb trees. He climbs barefoot, scampering up mango trees, neem trees, and any other tree where he can reach the lowest branch. He also plays soccer barefoot in the backyard with his older brother. And they can do this year-round, living in Nicaragua.

Here in Canada, life is different in so many ways. Children are often not allowed to climb trees or play barefoot outdoors at parks or summer camps. Doing cartwheels in the schoolyard at recess, girls can get in trouble from teachers if they take off their shoes—and in some schools they are not even allowed to do cartwheels in the playground at all.

This past Winter, I attended a “Risky Play” workshop led by the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada. The two-day program took place completely outdoors with active play sessions and discussions on child development and risk assessment around a campfire. On the second morning, one group role-played scenarios around how teachers can educate children on climbing trees safely, and my group prepared a

skit about children playing barefoot. We acted out different scenarios ranging from the teacher yelling at the children to put their shoes back on, to a scene where everyone got involved clearing an area to create a safe path for exploring barefoot. Two of our group members actually took off their boots and walked in the snow for this skit!

There are actually many benefits to walking barefoot. Did you know that walking in your bare feet helps improve your balance? This is because of how the brain sends signals through the muscle groups in your feet. The often-overlooked muscles in your feet play an important role in improving stability, balance, and posture.

When was the last time you walked on the grass or on sand without your shoes on? Unless you spent time at a southern beach or were brave enough to do a “polar bear dip” on New Year’s Day, likely you have not been barefoot outdoors since last Summer. If you are a gardener though, perhaps you have felt through your hands the earth slowly warming

Photo: Margaret Boyd

up and softening while you waited for Spring bulbs to emerge.

One of my favourite places to walk is the outdoor labyrinth where I work at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre. Walking the labyrinth provides opportunity for prayer and quiet meditation. Many of our guests enjoy walking this outdoor labyrinth built by Canada Youth Conference participants in 2006. (It is located near the prayer shelter built in 1985 by volunteers from St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Simcoe.)

One day, I noticed someone walking barefooted in the labyrinth. I took off my shoes and followed the path, feeling grounded and connected to the earth. At the centre, I stood on the warm rock absorbing the sun's energy through the soles of my feet. Walking barefoot is a sensory experience as you are conscious of the soles of your feet each step you take.

The action of taking off your shoes is symbolic. Remember the story of Moses and the burning bush, when God says to Moses: "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." In Biblical times, taking off your shoes was a sign of respect and humility.

So, take a walk with a little child this Spring, shed your shoes, and walk humbly on holy ground…there.

Photo: Margaret Boyd

is nothing like the feeling of mud between your toes!

> "Earth's crammed with heaven
> And every common bush afire with God
> But only he who sees, takes off his shoes"
> By Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Fiona van Wissen is Program Coordinator at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre in Puslinch (near Guelph, ON). Crieff Hills is open year-round for personal and group retreats, day visitors, business meetings, conferences, quilting groups, youth groups, and family reunions. The 250-acre site has eight kilometres of forested hiking trails. Buildings include a dining room, conference hall, six personal retreat suites, three hotel-style lodges, and five retreat houses. It is owned and operated by The Presbyterian Church in Canada. For more information, please call us at 1-800-884-1525 or visit our website at www.crieffhills.com.

Signs of Spring

by Katherine Allen

Suggested Hymns:
#256 Now the green blade rises
#674 In the bulb there is a flower

Suggested readings:
Matthew 12:40; John 12:24
John 12: 24
Matthew 6: 25–29

Romans 6:5: For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Spring is one of my favourite times of year. It is a time when we observe various signs of nature waking up after a winter's nap. One of the first signs of Spring is when the trees form a lime-green haze that can especially be seen from on top of a hill overlooking the horizon. Have you ever noticed the willow tree as it begins to form a yellowish colour, showing us that new leaves are about to grow on its thin branches. The tree in Spring bring us a promise of hope and grace.

Song of Songs 2:11–13: "The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance."

Spring is a time when we watch the Spring flowers peek through the ground, opening up a beautiful display of daffodils, crocuses, snowdrops, pansies, hyacinths, and many others, fragrancing the air. I love to walk along a path in the woods where we see the wild violets and trilliums carpeting the spongy ground. The flowers remind us of how God has set us free to grow and blossom.

Growing up in a small town was a time when we as kids explored the big field at the end of our street. In Spring, we watched the tall grass turn green, the wild flowers bloom, such as the forget-me-nots growing beside the creek, and the cocoons turning into beautiful butterflies. We would touch the furry white blossoms of the pussy willow tree. We tried catching tadpoles in a jar of water, and then put them back into the creek so that they could grow legs to become frogs or toads. The baby bunnies were born and hopped around the field keeping up with the mother rabbit. This experience helped me appreciate nature and to see the beauty of God's creation.

Matthew 6:26: Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Spring is a time when we listen to the birds greet one another with their cheerful songs. I am sure they are telling stories of their adventures over the past few months. Have you ever noticed how we get so excited when we see the first robin of the season, as we watch it dig for a juicy worm? How do we react when we see and hear the first colourful cardinal sitting on a tree branch calling out to a mate? This is a sure sign of Spring in my region.

Last year, in my neighbourhood there was one bird, perhaps a sparrow, whose song stood out from the others. He sounded like he was asking a question in a high-pitched tone, and the others responded with their answers. It was a joy just listening to this bird singing cheerfully. Watching the sparrows flutter about reminds me of the song, His eye is on the sparrow. Have you ever considered the words? They have such deep meaning. They tell us of how Jesus is watching over us when we are discouraged, or feeling troubled, and that we are set free because of friendship and hope. The verses end with the words, "His eye is on the sparrow and I know he watches me."

Isaiah 61:11: For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

There were signs around the house that it was Spring time. People doing their 'Spring' cleaning by opening the doors and cleaning the windows. The farmers prepare the land to plant their crops.

We had a large piece of property at a corner lot, where flowers grew in various flower beds. My father loved to garden and he would plant seeds so that we could have fresh vegetables to eat. He once said that he planted the beans for the rabbits to nibble on! He also planted gladiola bulbs, that displayed an array of colour, which he dug up in the Fall for protection from the frosty Winters.

These are some of the little signs of Spring that we may miss and yet they are reminders of how God fulfills his promises especially at Easter.

A memory I have of Easter is that as a child when I went to church on Easter Sunday. It was a time when people wore hats and gloves. I remember one year when I was very young, I wore a blue bonnet with a matching purse and white gloves, and a new dress. In church, we sat quietly listening to the story of how Jesus died and then rose from the dead. As we became older, we learned more of the meaning behind the story.

Springtime is when we examine our own spiritual journey of faith as we follow the season of Lent. The flower that we associate with Easter is the Easter Lily. Many churches decorate their sanctuaries with the Easter Lily, which symbolizes a new season, new life, and the purity of Christ. This leads us to the four gospels when we read the story of

how Jesus and his disciples visit the garden of Gethsemane to pray. The garden contains many ancient olive trees where I would imagine Jesus sat against to pray. As he was praying, Jesus knew he was betrayed when he watched the guards approaching to arrest him. The story continues with Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

In an anthem the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus sings, He is Alive (by Joel Raney), we sing about how Jesus was crucified and now is alive within us. One section is the familiar hymn, I come to the garden, where the words remind us that Jesus is walking with us and opens our eyes and heart knowing that He is Risen. The music and words are very powerful, and when we sing, we feel a very strong presence of the Holy Spirit. JESUS IS ALIVE within each one of us.

(All scriptures are NRSV)

Katherine Allen took early retirement in August 2012 after working with the Women's Missionary Society for 40 years as Administrative Assistant which included Circulation Manager of Glad Tidings. She serves as secretary for the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus, Recording Secretary for the CNOB Synodical, and is President of East Toronto Presbyterial. She enjoys photography, genealogy, and spending time with friends.

Garden of Gethsemane

Life From Upside Down (or Helter-Skelter)

by L. June Stevenson

In early March last year, I slipped and fell in the middle of the night. No one else was in the house and I couldn't get up without extreme pain. I couldn't reach anything to help me. I lay there, and I lay there. Some realtors were coming around 10 in the morning and I hoped we would connect. I lay and watched as the sky eventually began to lighten. Never one to let an opportunity pass for making sense of what seemed senseless, I turned my mind to scripture.

The last weekend of Christ's life was an upside down one for his faithful followers. The first disturbing thought came to them before they went to Bethany, when Jesus said, "You know that Passover comes in two days. That's when the son of Man will be betrayed and handed over for crucifixion," (Matthew 26:1). Then again when he and his disciples were sharing a meal in the Upper Room, he startled them by saying, "One of you is going to hand me over to the conspirators" but never revealing who it was. Then, when he drank from the cup which he declared was God's new covenant he told them, "I'll not be drinking wine from this cup again until that new day when I'll drink with you in the kingdom of my father" (Matthew 26:29).

Heading for the Garden of Gethsemane, they left the Upper Room only to hear Jesus speak again. "You are all going to feel that your world is falling apart and that it's all my fault. There's a scripture that says, 'I will strike the shepherd; the sheep will go helter-skelter' "(Luke 14:28). His disciples were simple peasants, many of them fishermen, who had grown and matured in their faith. But now their world was turning upside down. Their anchor was being pulled from them; the one they depended upon would no longer be their pillar of strength.

The first one to capitulate was Peter although he emphatically declared, "Even if everyone is ashamed of you when things fall to pieces, I won't be" (Luke 14:29). Peter, that fiery disciple, failed in the end. Three times he denied he knew Jesus. And what happened to the other disciples? Judas, the one whom Jesus referred to at the table, the one who sold Jesus to the authorities, the chief priests, for 30 pieces of silver, threw the silver coins at their feet and went out and hanged himself. The burden of guilt he felt was too much to bear.

The others are not mentioned in Scripture. Some must have disappeared into the safety of their own homes. Did others hang around in the shadows and watch as their Lord and Master was taken into custody and shamed as a criminal? Did they watch in secret as their Lord was put onto a wooden beam and left to die?

Talk about faithfulness. Talk about betraying someone you love. What did they have in their lives to return to? What could ever compare with the life they had lived with Jesus? What a gift they received to be chosen to follow him—a gift that was forgotten in a breath.

Fortunately, many of them came creeping back when they heard that Jesus had risen as he said. Some were still dubious about the risk to themselves. They were all gathered together however when Jesus came to them in Jerusalem, acknowledging that he had indeed risen and that they were commissioned to go out and tell the story to everyone they met.

It sure beats lying on the floor looking at life from upside down. It was a sobering comfort to me to think of what both Jesus and his disciples endured in the last week of his life. What lay ahead of me—the pain, the therapy—was so insignificant in the larger scheme of things. But it led to a greater understanding of that last week of Jesus' life. Sometimes it's good to reflect on life from upside down!

Scripture is taken from The Message, Eugene Petersen.

Easter Worship

by Colleen Wood

Call to worship:

One: We lift our voices to God.
All: We cry out to our Lord.
One: As we wait,
All: We know that God is with us. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: #574, With the Lord as my guide

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, our souls long for your presence. Just as the Psalmist cried out to you, we cry out to you, our God. Be with us in this time of worship.

We know that in you there is forgiveness. In this time of quiet, we silently confess our sins to you.

~silence

Our hope is in the Lord. Redemption is ours. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Scripture: Psalm 130 and Romans 8:31–39

Hymn: #223, Were you there

Reflection:

I hate waiting. I hate waiting for my coffee to brew in the morning. I hate waiting for the kettle to boil for my afternoon tea. I hate waiting for the car to warm up on a cold winter's morning. I absolutely hate waiting in traffic! Of course, these are just little things that cause me to wait.

There are bigger things where the waiting is longer. These things are often worsened by the fact that I also hate to be late. Wanting to be early, means more waiting. I arrive ten minutes early for an appointment just to find out that they are running 15 minutes behind schedule, so I wait! I hate getting to a meeting early to find that the person who called it has yet to arrive. Again, minor inconveniences, but still more waiting.

Even more, I hate waiting for news. Waiting for test results. Waiting to find out if my children made the team or got the job. Waiting…to find out that everything is okay. There are many worriers in my family background and waiting brings this tendency out in me.

Yet, I am asked to wait—I am asked to, "wait in the Lord." In Psalm 130, the Psalmist starts in the depths, "Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord!" Obviously, this is a time of great trial. He asks for mercy and is looking for forgiveness. He waits, but he also trusts. I am sure, many of us have times in our own lives when we go through times of trial. Sometimes we may doubt God's presence. At other times, we may feel that we have done something that is unforgivable. Perhaps we do not feel worthy of love. We wait, for what feels like forever.

In this season of Easter, there is also waiting. I think about the disciples, of what their wait must have felt like. They had seen their friend arrested, tried, and crucified. Jesus was dead. Up to that point there was some bit of hope, something to believe in. But, now it was all over. There was nothing to do—

but wait. They had just witnessed the greatest drama of their life, and now, all they could do was wait.

For these early disciples, this Saturday was the Sabbath—already a day of rest. But on this particular Sabbath, I am sure rest was a struggle. This was a time of emptiness and waiting for them. They did not know how the story would end. With every noise, there also must have been fear. Fear that they would be next—that the powers in Rome would be coming for them. They must have feared arrest and even their own death. So, in this time of confusion and fear, all they could do was wait.

Each of us will experience times of waiting in our own lives. We will go through times of fear, confusion, and desolation. But, we know the end of the Easter story. We know that Christ died, and on the third day, Christ

rose again. We know, through the words of Romans 8, that because of this, nothing can separate us from God.

Fear cannot separate us from the love of God.

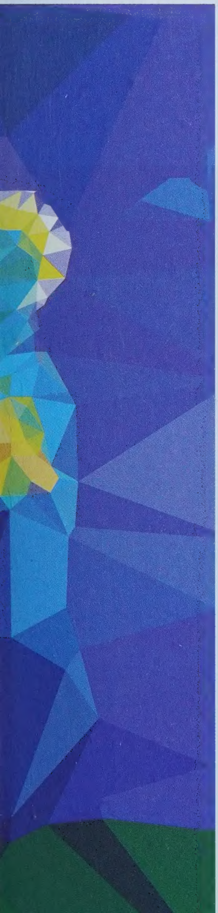
Sin cannot separate us from the love of God.

Worry cannot separate us from the love of God.

Our waiting will not separate us from the love of God.

God's love is with us in our time of waiting. As the disciples were waiting and weeping, God was in charge and had a plan. In their suffering, and in ours, God is with us.

My favourite song right now is You Say by Lauren Daigle. Here are the words of the chorus:



You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
You say I am held when I am falling short
When I don't belong, oh You say that I am Yours
And I believe, oh I believe
What You say of me
I believe

For me, these words act as a reminder that God is with me. No matter what, no matter how long I wait, God is present. We are God's! Life is full of waiting, but I thank God that I wait in the arms of my risen savior.

Prayer:

For a world that is waiting, we pray.

We pray for our world. For those who are living in areas of conflict, we pray for peace. For those who are living in areas of drought, we pray for gentle showers. For those without homes, we pray for shelter. For those who are awaiting the storm, we pray for peace.

We pray for our country. Be with our leaders and guide their actions. May they remember the hurting and marginalized in our own country.

We pray for our First Nations Peoples. May we show humility as we continue to journey with them in a process of Truth and Reconciliation.

We pray for our community. Be with those who are out of work. Be with those suffering from health issues. Be with those who are hungry. Be with those who are lonely. Help us bring love and care to all that we meet.

Be with each of us and help us to remember that you watch over and love us.

In Jesus name, we pray, Amen.

Offering:

Generous God, all that we have is yours. Take this money and use it to show your love in this world. Amen.

Hymn: #258, Thine be the glory

Blessings:

As we go forward today, may we always know that nothing in all of creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Circulation News

Did you know? New subscriptions are always welcome. Increasing subscriptions is the best way to see *Glad Tidings* continue as a vibrant resource for The Women's Missionary Society and the church. Every subscriber can help to promote the magazine.

You can pass a copy of your magazine along, or perhaps just an interesting article or two. If you want an extra copy to pass along, contact the office.

Consider some of the women in your church that might not be WMS members. Who would be interested in receiving *Glad Tidings*. Consider a one-year gift subscription for some of the women in your church.

Does your library receive *Glad Tidings*? Encourage them to subscribe. How about your minister? *Glad Tidings* is a great way for your minister to learn more about the WMS and our mission partners.

For more information on new subscriptions, contact the office today!

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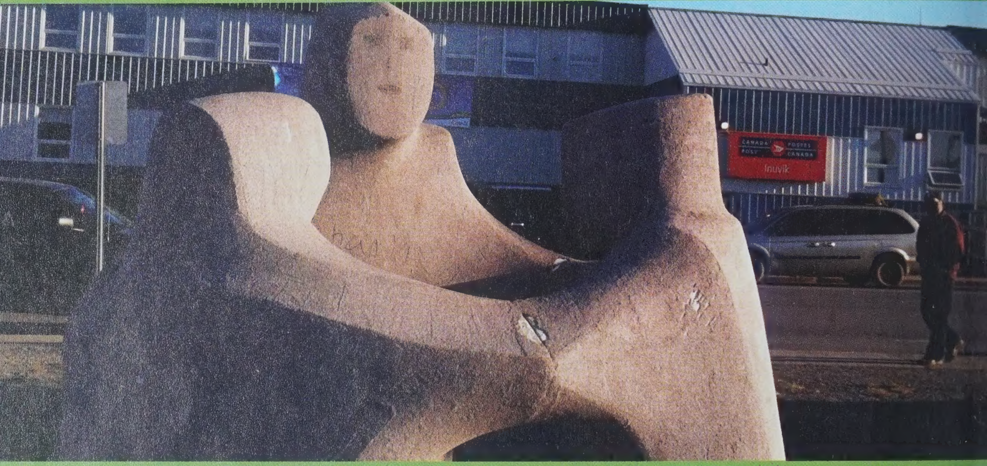
ABORIGINAL MINISTRIES **IN CANADA**, PART 2



Thanks to Ruth Magnuson and Yvonne Bearbull for their contribution to this study.

Opening:

As you begin, I encourage you to acknowledge the Traditional Territory of the Indigenous People where you are.

Find out the name of the Indigenous People on whose territory you are meeting. Resources for this can be found at: http://native-land.ca/; Friendship Centres; or college/university Indigenous studies faculty. You may also contact Justice Ministries at healing@presbyterian.ca.

Say words such as: We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional lands of the ___________. We acknowledge this territory's

significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived, and continue to live upon it, and whose practices and spiritualities were tied to the land and continue to develop in relationship to the territory and its other inhabitants today.

Opening Prayer:

Creator God, we pray for open hearts, spirits, and minds in our time of learning today. In Jesus name, we pray, Amen.

Scriptures:

Read: Luke 24:13–35

Ministries:

Winnipeg Inner City Mission: Walking Along the Path

This morning at WICM, a foster mother sat in our offices weeping. On the weekend her house had intruders. The police and Child and Family Service (CFS) workers walked in, without ringing the doorbell or knocking at the door, and said they were going to take the children.

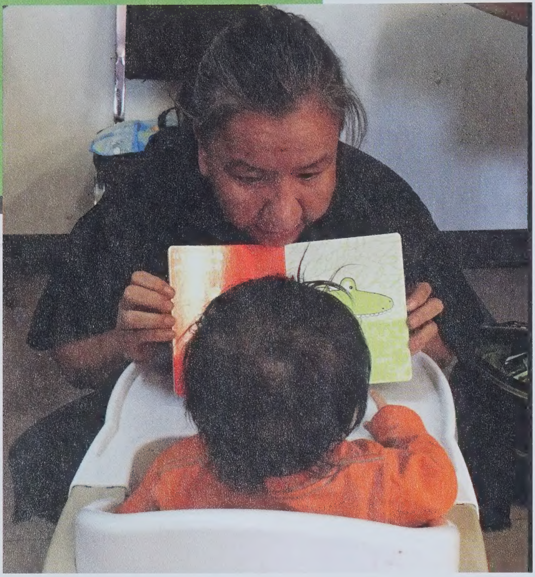
Everyone was confused. This foster mother has been caring for the children for years. She is an upstanding citizen, a volunteer in her community and her church. She advocates for the children and is ensuring they are healthy, educated, fed, and linking with the right people.

How did this happen? A revenge phone call made by someone in the community to CFS. It's that easy. I could make a phone call and be very angry and complain bitterly, and I could end your parenting career.

Thankfully, because of the adamant voices of the children insisting that they are in a safe home, and the pleas of the foster mother asking the police to check out the truth, the children were not removed. On Monday morning, visits to the child safety offices resolved the accusations.

Yet, trauma exists. Everyone is nervous. There is fear of someone coming in the door. There is the hovering threat that life can change in an instant.

I acknowledge that systems are in place to keep people safe. That's good.



The problem here is that in the Indigenous community in the north end of Winnipeg, life is tenuous. A vindictive person can ruin your life. You can be a model parent and community member, and someone who is envious or jealous can dramatically change your life. Children can be removed from caring and loving homes. Actions by officials feel like one is treated as guilty first, and truths are hardly accepted.

Our office is a safe place. A place where people can come with their trauma, their hurt, and their tears. We don't tolerate misbehavior; we call people out on their actions. We provide love and companionship to everyone. In this case, we wept with a mother who was experiencing great pain and true agony and blatant mistreatment. We offered to provide counselling to the family, which was accepted. We were present. The Flora House staff work with the children to ensure they are coping and get the supports they require.

The story of the Road to Emmaus, Luke 24:13–35, is frequently in my mind when we accompany our children, youth, and residents. How wonderful it feels when we can walk a long road with others. God is present in these encounters.

Many of the adults with whom we work have histories of abuse, and alcohol and drug addictions. They must be clean and sober for at least a year before entry into our program. Adults in our 1st Steps to Employment Project, who live at our residence called A Place of Hope, work very hard to stay on a positive path, and to educate or retrain themselves in order to get sustainable employment. We have several people who are taking courses to overcome personal issues with relationships or their health before they can think about employment. Everyone walks past our offices when they enter the building. We hear immediately of their successes, challenges, and disappointments. They get support and encouragement as needed.

We walk alongside the residents in their time of trial. We help them see the light in the darkness. These aren't biblical clichés or words written lightly. This is real, this is tough, this is joy filled, this is everyday life.

The National Native Ministries Council

The National Native Ministries Council (NNMC) exists to strengthen the relationship between the church and Indigenous people. Its primary areas of work include encouraging those working in Indigenous ministry to receive education in Indigenous culture and spirituality, advising the church on how to distribute funds for Indigenous ministry and to encourage the next generation of Indigenous leaders. Members of the NNMC along with the Associate Secretaries of Canadian and Justice Ministries gathered in British Columbia in January 2018.

Member ministries:

- Kenora Fellowship Centre
- Winnipeg Inner City Mission
- Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry
- Mistawasis Memorial Church
- Edmonton Urban Native Ministry
- Nazko and Dakleth Outreach Ministry
- Hummingbird Ministries
- Cedar Tree Ministry

Staff are truly stretched to perform their jobs. You might find us cleaning a floor, washing dishes, or figuring out a mechanical problem. There are three buildings, two that are very old and require major upgrades and upkeep. And A Place of Hope is now 11 years old, no longer new and needing upkeep. There is no maintenance staff. There is no secretarial staff. There is no weekend relief staff when issues arise for residents or in the buildings.

As staff, we may not see all the people who accompany us on our journey. We do appreciate the donations, the cards, the words of encouragement, and the requests when you want to know more about what we do. Then we know you are with us and our families. Some days, when we deal with so many heartbreaks,

late reports, and a toilet overflows, we find you in the cookies delivered, the cheque in the mailbox, the enquiry on the phone, and your patience to receive communication from us.

We will all continue to walk the path of life knowing that all around us is the grace-filled presence of God.

The following questions are typical of situations we encounter. How would you respond?

1. A resident was once evicted due to violating the ‘no consumption of alcohol or drugs while living at A Place of Hope’ rule. A few years later, the person returns, can prove he has been clean and sober, has one of the star residents as his friend, and he insists that he is ready to fully obey the rules and participate in the program. While listening to him during an intake interview, the staff have very mixed feelings—they love that he is turning his life around—after all, and isn’t that what we help people do? But, during the first time when he lived here, he was one of the most difficult residents ever experienced by the staff.

   Would you accept him again into the program?
2. A participant in the children and youth programs at Flora House comes from a family where the parents are users of drugs, regular meals are not provided, and parenting is lacking. The child has attended the Flora House programs for a couple of years and experienced safety and support, good food, and healthy activities. She hits her teen years and starts to use bully-type behavior towards others. She wants to be there but isn’t following the respect-filled rules. As staff, you know that if she doesn’t come to Flora House, she will be on the streets and likely be taken in by gangs. Her behavior is disrupting the healthy environment at Flora House.

   What do you do?

Anamiewigummig Kenora Fellowship Centre
The Fellowship Centre is situated on the Traditional Territory of Treaty Three Anishinaabe Nation.

Kenora Fellowship Centre is a mission with

ANAMIEWIGUMMIG
Fellowship
Centre

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. We strive to engage with various non-Indigenous ministries focusing on relationship building and fostering supportive programs and outreach. Our ministry interacts with predominantly Indigenous people who have been directly impacted by the effects of the Indian Residential school system including colonization.

Kenora Fellowship Centre, since its inception in 1967, has provided numerous services and various mandates all in an effort to respond to community needs. More recently, the need has been focused on housing and shelter. Many we serve have been displaced and removed from their home communities for various reasons. For over 15 years, we have operated a 21-bed emergency shelter with minimal contribution funding from the local District Services Board, and have relied heavily on donations. Part of this was also to provide food, clothing, and other basic supports such as a daily drop-in centre on a 24/7 basis. The upkeep of such an operation was not doable without adequate funding. We have had to discontinue this operation and now provide transition and room-and-board housing programs. Approximately 75–80 % of our drop-in centre patrons are considered homeless and have been for a year or more.

Currently, we are facing a shortfall for 2018 as it has been for the past number of years. Our focus has been on keeping the doors open and providing a place of safety.

Some of our other shortfalls are in the area of:

- Staffing – with the increase in usage, we need additional staff for safety reasons
- Food and supplies – we provide breakfast, lunch, and supper
- Equipment maintenance and upgrade – laundry, kitchen appliances, and mattresses
- Utilities – hydro and phone

- Training – our staff are constantly dealing with people with all kinds of issues and are in need of ongoing training in, for example, conflict resolution
- Mentorship programs – these have been very successful, however, due to inadequate resources, is not sustainable
- Healing and wellness gatherings – these provide information and awareness to patrons.

Although we have had previous fundraising coordinators, at this time however we only have a short-term Coldest Night of the Year Event coordinator. We participate in various awareness campaigns within the church. We also receive great support from the local community of Kenora through businesses and individuals.

The majority of our patrons are residential school survivors, intergeneration survivors, including those affected by the 60s scoop, and the many teens aging out of the child welfare system. One of the things we don't see at our centre are children because of the many family breakdowns and those who have been separated from their parents by the child welfare system. Recently, we have been responding to the increasing use of Opiods and the dangers of fentanyl, and the impact these abuses are having on mainly young people, and also the loss of life.

One of the highlights of our work has been with a group of very committed, strong, and inspirational elders. Together, we have coordinated reconciliation focused events and blanket exercises. We have reached many different target groups and have been ambassadors for resetting right relations between indigenous and non indigenous people, churches, and groups. They have found a strength that far surpasses any conventional healing models as a result of their own experiences of being survivors of

the Indian Residential School, and everything that came along with that. It has been our privilege to walk with them, break bread together, listen to one another, and learn from one another.

We have engaged young men and women dealing with addiction, poverty, and poor health into our housing programs, and have seen a positive impact. We have many patrons who have lived at the fellowship centre for years. This speaks to the fact of the lack of housing and seemingly discrimination practices by many landlords. Our project Homefind address those specific issues, and we continue to operate our housing programs with best practices and have seen more positive results. We receive referrals from the courts and have provided support to many from the treaty nine communities, and it has been a great learning experience for us in dealing with them.

To keep in touch, you can find us on Facebook at Kenora Fellowship Centre.

Reflection:

1. Almost all of our Indigenous people have some history with residential schools and the 60s scoop? Even the young children have parents or grandparents who were directly affected. The legacy of the schools and the scooping of children have resulted in a few generations of dysfunction leading to drug and alcohol abuse, lack of knowledge to parent effectively, and the inability to establish trusting relationships.

   What do you need to learn about the effects of generational trauma particularly on the Indigenous population? Where and how will you seek out that information?

2. What are the REAL thoughts you have in your head when you see an Indigenous person? Name them and write them down. If these thoughts are negative,

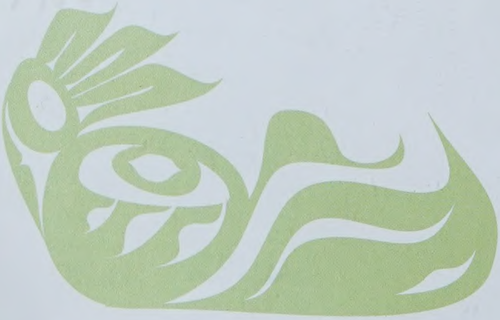
Celebrating
National
Aboriginal
Day

ask yourself, "What do you need to do to reframe those thoughts into non-judgmental statements that reflect an understanding of the issues Indigenous peoples are facing?"

3. Thinking back to our passage from Luke, how do we walk with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. How do we point others to the resurrected Jesus?

Closing Prayer:

Gracious God, we give you thanks for the abundance of love and grace you shower upon us. Open our eyes to see you amid life's most challenging moments. Open our hearts to extend love to those we find challenging to love, and open our ears, enabling us to hear stories of hardship and recovery. Open our minds to be willing to change our thoughts and to be willing to help freely when we can. Present God, thank you for being near, even when we cannot see. Amen.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Healing and Reconciliation Resources:

Equipping for Leadership: A guide for churches to respond to Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action provides suggestions on how to read the Calls to Action.

Reconciliation Activities for Children help children better understand the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada and how they can be a part of the reconciliation journey.

A Time for Hope provides liturgies and suggestions to help leaders lift up Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights in Indigenous People in worship.

Healing and Reconciliation Seed Fund: Grants of up to $5000 are available from The Presbyterian Church in Canada to support initiatives by Presbyterian groups that are building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

For more information on any of these resources, contact Justice Ministries, The Presbyterian Church in Canada: Carragh Erhardt at 1-800-619-7301, ext. 278 or cerhardt@presbyterian.ca

Greetings from Budapest

Stephanie Chunoo

Sziasztok from Budapest! My name is Stephanie Chunoo and I am the current PCC young adult intern who will be working in Budapest with the Kalunba Non-profit Organization for the next ten months. Kalunba is a part of the Reformed Church of Hungary's (RCH) refugee ministry implementing organization, and they assist refugees and asylum seekers who have come from Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Cameroon to integrate into Hungarian society.

The centre focuses on three areas of integration—education, through offering Hungarian language classes for everyone (from adults to young kids), employment, and housing help. The goal is to have these new members of society well integrated within one year of their arrival into Hungarian society.

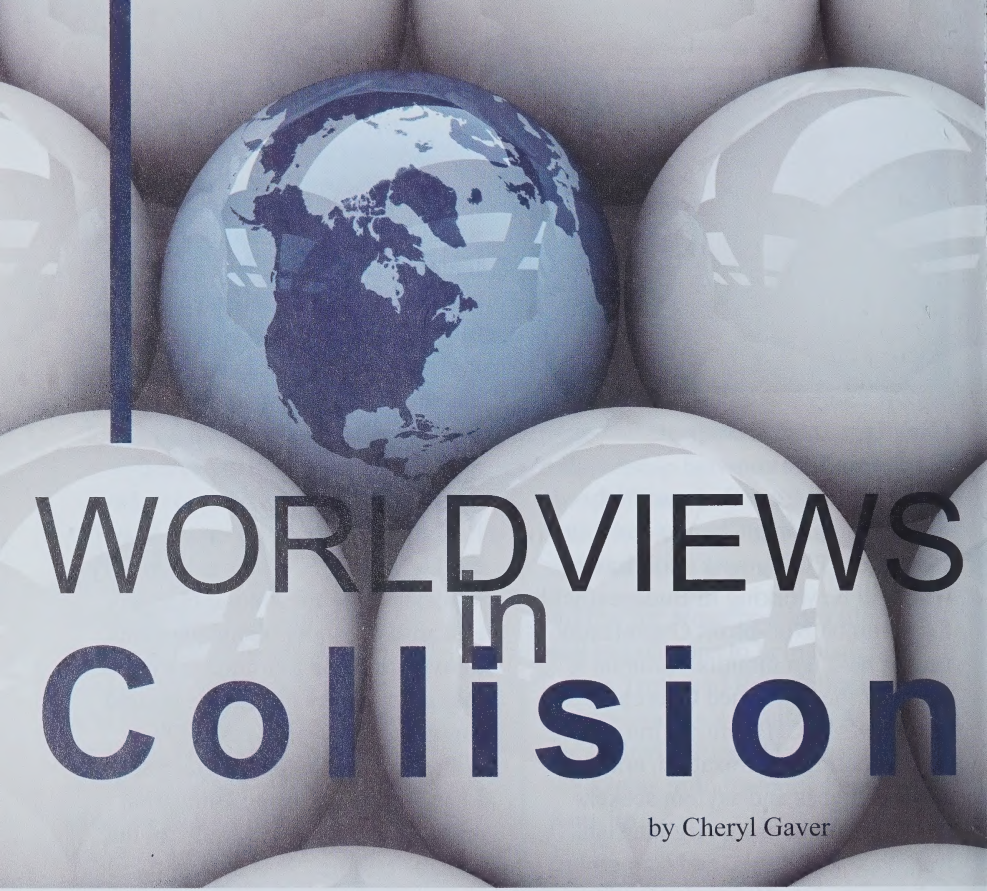
My role at Kalunba is to assist in the day-to-day tasks, such as offering child care, lobby services, English classes, and to plan activities for the kids.

In the beginning of my internship, I was very homesick. This was very surprising to me, as I had lived abroad before and had not felt like this. Everything was new for me here. From the language to the metro and the food to all the new faces, everything was new. I felt uncomfortable at first because of my new surroundings and all the stares I got from strangers on the street!

Thankfully, I am blessed to have Priscilla, another RCH intern from the United States. She has been very kind, showing me around Hungary and answering my many questions. I have also tried to immerse myself into a routine by hitting the ground running and keeping myself busy with work and language classes. I have started learning Hungarian and I take classes with some of our refugee families. It is quite difficult, so I am very impressed with how fast my classmates are learning, both the adults and the children. During Fall break for some of the children, I had the chance to meet most of them—they are a very unique bunch.

I have faith that eventually Hungary will feel more like home to me. I have to remind myself that I have only been here for a short time, and slowly but surely I will adjust—hopefully sooner rather than later.

I would also like to thank you all for your continuous support and prayers, and they are much needed and appreciated!



WORLDVIEWS in Collision

by Cheryl Gaver

It used to be so simple. We all went (at least we were expected to go) to church on Sunday mornings. We were essentially all Christians (with a few people from other faiths here and there). We knew the Bible (King James Version back when!), and knew what God wanted us to be and to do.

Except that was all a lie. We were living in a bubble. Growing up in Quebec, the daughter of American immigrants, I found I didn't fit into either the Anglo or French communities—I was too American. When I attended an American university, I discovered I didn't fit in there either—I was too Canadian.

At university, my German professor insisted that literature was a pure art form that had nothing to do with actual events of the day; a play set in ancient Greece was just a play set in ancient Greece. But my French professor insisted that literature always reflected the culture of the time and was frequently used to critique society. A play set in ancient Greece that dealt with an illegitimate ruler became a call to join the French resistance in overthrowing the illegal occupation by the Nazis!

Without knowing it, I had just been introduced to the fact that different cultures might espouse *different worldviews*. Worldviews are more than how we view the world—they reflect how the ways we look at the world actually shape our understandings of reality!

Those experiences of not belonging shaped not just my character but also my interests. How did the Gospel change as it moved from a Jewish worldview to a Greco-Roman one? How has it changed as it moved from a Greco-Roman worldview to non-Western cultures? Can we preach a Gospel that is faithful to what God has revealed without blending it with our own culture? Can we preach a Gospel that is faithful to God and still be respectful of worldviews that differ from our own?

My interest in worldviews led me to wonder how people from different cultures/worldviews interacted and negotiated shared spaces, such as congregations. That led to my doctoral research which focused on the Anglican Church in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. I had begun my research with a simple question: While the church-as-a-whole had apologized for its treatment of Indigenous people in residential schools, what was happening at the congregational level? I decided not to focus on claims of physical or sexual abuse which were being handled by the courts and which "everyone" could condemn, but rather to focus on areas that were less obvious or less visible. I had expected to find evidence of colonialism (specifically, evidence of racist, arrogant, and paternalistic attitudes and behaviours). What I discovered were examples of *worldviews-in-collision*.

For example, one residential school superintendent told about how bright her Indigenous students had been, but then said that they didn't know who they were related to. Quite naturally, she had identified relationships from our Western patrilineal perspective (e.g., children are given their father's surname and their father plays an important role in their lives). She never considered her students might have defined relationships differently. She never realized that her students defined relationships from their own matrilineal perspective (e.g., children are identified by their mother's clan; their mother's brother plays the important role in their lives while their father plays a minimal role).

Beyond racist/paternalistic attitudes and actions—and even beyond intentional colonialism—are those attitudes and behaviours that reflect values we aren't even aware of. The result is that we too often are guilty of cultural colonialism without even knowing it. Examples include our Western attitudes towards human beings (aren't we at the top of the evolutionary ladder?) and our attitudes towards dreams (easy enough to dismiss), but for many Indigenous cultures, human beings are at the bottom and dreams are key to accessing other worlds.

Or, as happened in one congregation: a Bishop's letter was read from the pulpit during one service. In it, the Bishop talked about the need for Anglicans to support schools run by the church in some African country. Non-Indigenous people were quite interested and, following the service, asked the priest what they could do. Indigenous people, on the other hand, kept silent. I wondered at the Bishop's wording. Didn't he realize he was asking parishioners to support the running of a residential school somewhere else? Didn't he see the similarity to Anglicans running residential schools in Canada?

We hear and respond to the Gospel from within a cultural context.

If we don't understand how much we bring of our own culture into our society—our lives, our schools, our churches, our faith—then how can we even begin to talk about reconciliation with Indigenous people or accommodation with other cultures?

We used to train and send missionaries to convert people in other countries. Sometimes we recognized and accommodated different worldviews; sometimes we didn't. Nowadays, people from other countries are here in Canada, worshipping alongside us, but do we recognize, respect, and accommodate the different worldviews and even the different understandings of Christianity they bring with them? This is, I believe, one of the greatest challenges we face today.

Without trying to debate issues that divide Presbyterians today, we need to ask: How much of our ideas of "normal" or "natural" reflect our cultural values more than they do of God's commandments?

The Bible speaks of male and female, but how do we deal with cultures that acknowledge more than two genders? We tend to understand marriage in terms of love, but how do we deal with those cultures which understand marriage in terms of building connections/relationships? How do we deal with cultures that never consider people should choose spouses for themselves? How important is any of this when juxtaposed with a person's relationship with Jesus?

We say we welcome Christians into our churches, regardless of who they are or where they come from, but how well do our architecture and church structure welcome them? Or have we simply designed our churches to reinforce Western culture? For example, when ministers stand at the pulpit, above the congregation, we are easier for the congregation to see and hear, but at the same time, we affirm the hierarchical structure of our church and the view that we are separate from the rest of the people. How do people feel if they are from circle societies that stress no one is higher or more important than anyone else? We organize people to sit in pews, row after row, but what does that say about their place in worship or their place in church?

Many churches are now adding screens to their service; this may make it easier to stop using bulletins or hymn books and save money in the long-term. Since church sanctuaries are generally built without a slanting floor like we find in theatres, how welcoming is this for short people trying to see the screens when tall people are in front of them? We're so used to worshipping Sunday mornings in a church building that we cannot even imagine doing anything different, but what are we saying to people who work shifts and possibly work Sundays? Or to people who feel more comfortable in other types of buildings, or perhaps even in being outdoors?

We want to preach the Gospel—but how much of our own culture have we included as part of the Gospel we preach? We laugh at accounts of 19th-century missionaries who believed that one hadn't really converted to Christianity unless one dressed and ate meals like Europeans, but what elements have *we* added to the Gospel without knowing it?

We hear and respond to the Gospel from within a cultural context. It is impossible to do anything else. A Gospel separated from a culture is so esoteric that it becomes lifeless and, essentially, meaningless. The Gospel comes alive only when we respond to it in our own lives, within our own cultures. Having Christians from different cultures interact not only reminds us that the church is universal, but also makes it easier for us to recognize the cultural dimensions within which it has become alive. In so doing, it becomes easier for us to remember God transcends cultural limitations, and be able to encounter the living God.

Different worldviews. Different Gospels. The same Jesus, who lived and died within a Jewish worldview but who, as our risen Lord, has transcended (or, perhaps better, is incarnate in) all cultures. The living God.

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Gaver is Presbytery Ministry Animator for the Presbyteries of Ottawa and Seaway-Glengarry, and a Healing & Reconciliation representative for the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry.

IT'S TIME FOR JUSTICE

International Affairs Committee

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). For those who are isolated, God brings comfort.

Violence against Women and Girls in Nicaragua

Half of all Nicaraguan women and girls will experience violence, including sexual violence, in their lifetimes. High levels of poverty increase their vulnerability to violence and contributes to feelings of isolation.

Their vulnerability is compounded by a Nicaraguan law that maintains a full ban on abortion, even in cases of rape, incest or when continuing the pregnancy threatens the health or the life of the mother. Such cases are referred to as therapeutic abortion. Nicaragua is one of only three countries in the world to ban therapeutic abortion.

Criminalizing therapeutic abortion does not decrease the number of abortions, but rather drives women and girls to seek clandestine medical procedures, or to not seek needed medical attention.

The ban was set in 2006. In the year following, Nicaraguan women's organizations attributed the death of 82 women as a result of the ban.

The Church Responds

Presbyterian World Service & Development supports the Institute for Human Promotion (INPRHU) in Managua, Nicaragua, which provides shelter for young women and girls who have been living in abusive situations. INPRHU does not provide therapeutic abortion procedures.

The Moderator of the PCC wrote to PWS&D's partners in Nicaragua to express support for their work with victims of violence.

The Moderator also wrote to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs requesting that she raise the matter of decriminalizing therapeutic abortion with the Government of Nicaragua.

Prayer

Loving God, we declare our support of women and girls around the world, especially for those who suffer as a result of gender-based violence and discrimination. Victims need our ongoing prayers and care.

Gracious God, we pray that all victims of violence will be surrounded by your love and comfort.

Amen.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Ontario Presbyterian Chorus on Tour

by Katherine Allen

I have a magnet on my refrigerator that reads, "Those who sing, pray twice." That is the way we feel when we sing as a chorus to the glory of God. The Ontario Presbyterian Chorus ministry of music is like a prayer as we touch the hearts of many. We may not necessarily know of people's needs or burdens, but we know that a particular piece of music may reach out and perhaps will change a person's life in some way.

Our faith journey was ever present during our week-long tour in September as we explored north-central Ontario. Each day, we began with various choir members leading the daily devotional which was often deep and meaningful as the message led us on our day's journey.

During our first concert at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, we felt a strong sense of the Holy Spirit as we sang, especially during our anthem, He Is Alive. I felt like it was the Holy Spirit singing. One of the other choir members expressed, "The Holy Spirit was present in our singing in a way that perhaps hasn't happened so strongly in the past, and that was very much felt by the congregations we sang within—especially in Huntsville".

We also had concerts at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie. In Sault Ste. Marie, our presence brought together three Presbyterian Church congregations—Westminster, St. Paul's, and Victoria. On Sunday morning, we took part

in the morning worship at all three churches. The choir was divided so that some attended at St. Paul's, and the rest at Westminster to sing a couple of pieces with their local church choir. In the evening, we put on a full concert at Westminster.

In addition to our concerts, we explored Bala Falls and Johnson's Cranberry Marsh; the Logging Museum and Visitor's Centre in Algonquin Park; Big Nickel and Dynamic Earth in Sudbury, and the Ermtinger Clergue National Historic Site in Sault Ste Marie. We also saw the scarecrows along the main street in Meaford and took a train through Agawa Canyon.

Here are a couple of reflections by choir members:

- "Bonding with each other in these special and intimate moments endeared us all a little more with each other. There were some rather difficult life circumstances during our time away but it drew us even closer together. Our bus driver was an exceptional lady, who kept us safe and cared for us throughout our musical adventure. We are grateful to have had the chance to share time and Songs of Christ with our new friends. God is So Good." ~ Geri
- "Despite our having had a few challenging incidents (which fortunately weren't worse!), I feel that the spirit of the trip and the fellowship we experienced were both great!" ~ Liz
- "What an awesome trip with an amazing group of people. Being fairly new to the OPC the trip gave me an opportunity to bond with everyone and get to know them better. The sights of God's handiwork, the congregations we met, and the beautiful music we shared, all came together as a fantastic experience to praise and glorify God for His love and goodness to us all!" ~ Dianne

In the Society

Presbyterial

Melville Presbyterian Church in Brussels ON hosted the Fall Rally of **Maitland** Presbyterial on September 24 with the theme, Our Work in Missions is STUDY.

Prophesies from the Old Testament of the coming Messiah were followed by celebration songs of his birth in Bethlehem. Then we studied modern-day Presbyterian missionaries that continue to share the gospel. Rev. Dr. Paul McLean and Louise Gamble both work in Taiwan and David MacIntosh works with Koreans in Japan. Dr. Nick and Becky Bauman work as medical doctor and occupational therapist respectively at a hospital in Nepal. Rev. Joel Sherbino shares his time with his church in Paris ON and in Malawi the Rev. Dr. Blair and Vivian Bertrand are raising their children in Malawi where he works teaching theology at Zomba Theological College and also with youth and youth leaders. The study of these lives was interspersed with vocal musical selections by guest soloist, Lana McKague of Teeswater.

An honorary membership of the WMS was presented to Jean Press, of Chesley and a short ceremony marking the disbanding of Ripley Presbyterian WMS was marked.

London Presbyterial held their one-day May retreat at Backus Page Museum, South of Dutton, with the theme, Mission in Action at Home. After a welcome and sing-song, the Rev. John Bannerman spoke on the 2017 Healing and Reconciliation Tour he participated in. They visited Winnipeg Inner City Missions, the area of the Cecelia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora, and Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry. The hospitality of the Indigenous people they met and visited impressed them all.

After lunch and another sing-song, the Belmont WMS women led a worship service with the theme, Missionaries. Everyone can be a missionary—at home or abroad. Valerie Shaw closed the meeting with prayer.

London Presbyterial held their Fall Mission Day in October at Burns Mosa Presbyterian Church, Glencoe, with the theme, Journey to Turtle Island. Valerie Shaw, president, convened the meeting with prayer and the WMS purpose statement.

After a sing-song, the Rev. Michael Burns brought greetings. After our guest speaker was unavailable, Joan Boyce filled in and spoke on The Road to Reconciliation.

After a delicious lunch and another sing-song, Katherine Sisk, Program Coordinator for Justice Ministries with The Presbyterian Church in Canada, was introduced. She led the group through the blanket

London Presbyterial
May Retreat

exercise, allowing us time to express our feelings.

We closed with prayer and by singing, Go now in peace.

~Elaine Brown

Woodville Presbyterian Church hosted the annual meeting of the **Lindsay** Presbyterial on January 30 with 24 women attending. After coffee and muffins, gathering music called everyone together for the business meeting. Norma MacEachern of Woodville welcomed us and Lizz Hoyle opened with prayer based on Psalm 139:13 and acknowledged the native land on which the church stands to-day.

Following Roll call and reciting the WMS purpose, the minutes of the previous meeting and the annual meeting for 2017 were read.

Reports from the executive followed. Eileen Mennell, outgoing Treasurer, gave the Financial Report for 2018. Eileen was honoured for her 21 years as Treasurer with a plaque and a plant. Ellen Roberts of Bobcaygen will assume the treasurer responsibilities for 2019. Joan Anderson of Cresswell gave the Children`s Report highlighting that two boys from Beacan were sponsored at Camp Cairn this summer. The Nominating Committee reported that all vacancies on the executive were filled for 2019. All of the reports were approved by the group.

The new business included the sharing of the objectives to the General Fund for each group. This figure is based on the number of groups in the Presbyterial and the number of members in each group. The topic of history books for each group was discussed suggesting each group keep a book for themselves. This topic will be discussed again.

The number of meetings per year will be studied by the executive with a proposal to be presented at the next meeting. Included in the proposal will be the possibility of combining the smaller groups to make one stronger group.

Cannington led the In Memoriam service remembering five members who passed away in 2018: St. John`s Cresswell- Doreen Acton, Beacan, Beaverton -Mary Harriss, St. Andrew’s Lindsay - June Mason, Carol Wright and Barbara McEachern.

The meeting closed with prayer and grace as we enjoyed a prepared lunch from the Woodville ladies.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at Glenarm hosted the Fall meeting of the **Lindsay** Presbyterial on September 26.

Following registration, with muffins and coffee, gathering music called us to the sanctuary where Helen Torrey led a hymn sing.

President Lizz Hoyle opened the meeting by reading a Nairobi prayer reflecting many of our concerns in today's world. She then honoured and recognized the Aboriginal lands on which the church stands today. Then, Fay Nicholson, Clerk of Session of St. Andrew's Glenarm, welcomed us and gave a brief history of the WMS at St. Andrew's.

Women from Knox Presbyterian Church, Cannington presented a devotion on the 2018 theme of Change with a reading on becoming a butterfly, based on Romans 12:2.

A letter from the WMS of Wick Presbyterian Church was read declaring that their group disbanded in June, and we heard follow-up news of the church closure.

A guest speaker, Ann Austin-Caldwell was introduced and she spoke of her experiences of ministering to the Nuxalk First Nations people of Bella Coola BC.

We adjourned for lunch and fellowship.

~Linda Taylor

The **Lanark-Renfrew** Fall Rally was held in Renfrew on September 22 with the theme, The Inviting Colours of Fall. Betty Zwiers welcomed all and gave a brief history explaining why Renfrew's WMS is named after Dr. Margaret O'Hara, a nurse native to Smiths Falls, who founded two hospitals and an orphanage in India in the early 1900s.

Devotions, based on 2 Corinthians 4:3, began with the singing of, This is the day. President Mary-Lynn spoke about the inviting colours of Fall and made an analogy to the characteristics we show—red stands for passion, orange represents warmth and kindness, yellow is cheerful and happy, and purple represents royalty. Do we portray colours which will influence people to want to know about God? The hymn, Christ, whose glory fills the skies, concluded the service.

Mary-Lynn gave the Synodical Report. The Synodical President completed her term and there is no replacement and an ad-hoc committee is meeting to discuss the future of the synodical.

Vivian Young taught us about Praying in Colour. Prayers based on the senses are said to be green prayers. Prayers of intuition and mystery are the yellow prayers. Those which are reasoned and logical are blue prayers. Prayers of feeling and passion are the red prayers. Bible passages and hymns were related to the colours. Circumstances influence the different ways in which we pray.

Then we enjoyed special music

sung by Khloe Bertrand who accompanied herself on the guitar.

The guest speaker was the Rev. David McFarlane, minister of Renfrew Presbyterian Church on the theme, Love Trumps Hate. Rev. David had been to Nicaragua, Malawi, and Cuba on mission trips. His presentation, enhanced with power-point pictures, was on his most recent trip in October 2017 to Israel and Palestine. Everyone enjoyed the revealing and most touching presentation.

~Vivian Young

Local

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Mount Forest ON had a joint Christmas meeting and lunch with Conn WMS on December 5. At a special meeting afterwards, a motion was made to regretfully disband the group. This group has been active for 131 years.

Scripture and prayer was given by President Eleanor Huffman and a thank you given to all members who have worked so hard contributing in many ways and to the executive, Thelma Weiser, Jean Mackay, Marilyn Lamont, and Flora Cowan.

A summary of the past accomplishments and history was read in church on December 24.

~Eleanor Huffman

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In Memorium

Tamiko Nakamura Corbett
Tamiko Nakamura Corbett passed away on December 11, 2018. Tam Corbett served the WMS and the church as a teacher, missionary, and a visionary of change. Tam was a graduate of the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School (later changed to Ewart College) in 1959 and was designated to the Diaconal Order that May. She was a strong advocate for the diaconal order and believed in its importance to the church.

Tam served as a deaconess in the Presbytery of Westminster and then was appointed by the WMS to work with the Korean Christian Church in Japan from 1961–64. Tam was deeply involved in the work of the WMS throughout her life and served the WMS in a variety of roles including serving as Executive Secretary.

Tam also served The Presbyterian Church in Canada as the Moderator of the 122nd General Assembly. She approached this like so many things in her life, believing she didn't choose her life's events, they simply came to her. She continually followed God's Spirit as he guided her life.

Margaret Reynolds
Margaret Reynolds of Morrisburg, died peacefully, with her family by her side, at the Cornwall Community Hospital, McConnell Site, on December 30, 2018, at age 85. She was the beloved wife of the late Allard Reynolds. "Marg" was an Elder at Knox Presbyterian Church Morrisburg for over 35 years. She also served as representative elder at Presbytery and represented her Presbytery at General Assembly.

She was deeply involved in the Knox WMS and served on the WMS national executive. She had a deep passion for mission, especially mission education. While on the national executive, she chaired the Program Committee and later, the combined Program/Circulation Committee.

She was a great advocate for the WMS, and encouraged others to get involved and when they did, she was there to mentor and support them.

Marg was a women of great faith and that showed in her life and her ministry. She will be greatly missed.

Remembering

Kathy Tutty
St Andrew's WMS
Barrie ON

Mary Harriss
Beacan Presbyterian Church
Beaverton ON

Doreen Acton
St John's Presbyterian Church
Cresswell ON

Lois Carroll
Sarah McAlpine
Argyle Presbyterian Church
Crinan ON

Mary Rodgers
St. Andrew's WMS
Guelph ON

Emily Finney
St. Andrew's WMS
Kitchener ON

Beth Vosper
Doris Thompson
Knox Presbyterian WMS
Mitchell ON

June Mason
Carol Wright
Barbara MacEachern
St Andrew's Presbyterian Church
Lindsay ON

Mary Lou McKay
New St. James WMS
London ON

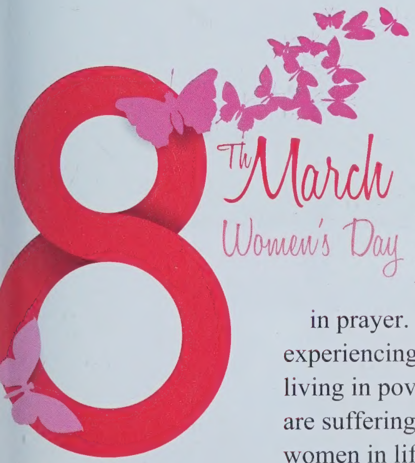
Catherine McGregor
Peggy Margaret Putnam
Margaret O'Hara Group
Renfrew ON

Ruth Finn
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Women
Scarborough ON

Kathleen (Kae) Soden
Agnes Tolmie Evening Auxiliary
Southampton ON

Isabelle Satchell
Knox WMS
Knox North Easthope
Stratford ON

Cheryl Eden
St. Andrew's WMS
Swinton Park ON



March 8 is International Women's Day, a day to celebrate women around the world and renew our efforts towards advancing gender equality. It is through my work with the WMS that I know the necessity of this day.

Today, take a moment to thank those women in your life that our making a difference in this world. Also, encourage the girls and women in your life. Finally, spend some time in prayer. Pray for those women in our world who are experiencing abuse or inequality. Pray for those who are living in poverty or unsafe situations. Pray for those who are suffering from mental illness. And give thank, for the women in life.

April 28, 2019

Theme:
No Doubt!

by Rev. Dr. Lynda Reid

Scripture:
John 20: 19–31

Mission Awareness Sunday

Resource is Available

The worship resource for Mission Awareness Sunday has been distributed. The material can be downloaded from www.wmspcc.ca/mission-awareness-sunday.

For a paper copy
email amckeown@
presbyterian.ca or call
800-619-7301 ext. 319.

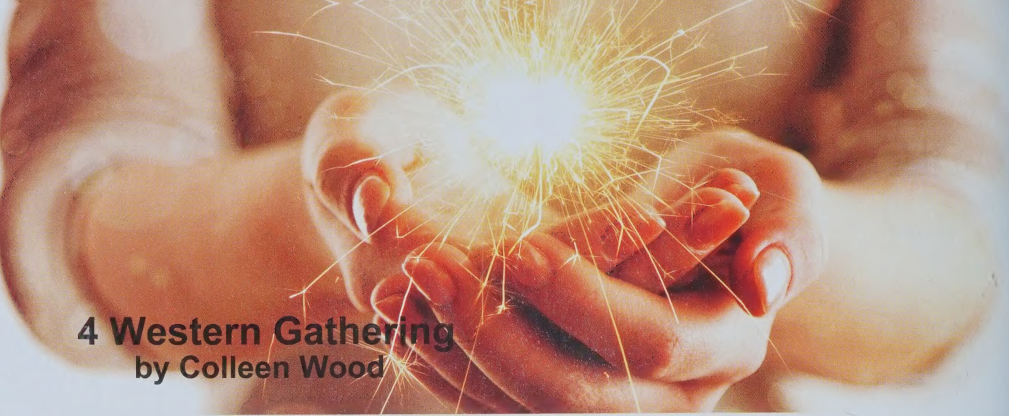
PM40013283 R9517

Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

May/June 2019

Happy Mother's Day



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by Colleen Wood

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Glad Tidings
May/June 2019
Volume 95, No. 3
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Funded by the Government of Canada | Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2019 subscription rate $20.00 plus applicable taxes: $21 for AB, BC, SK; $22.60 for ON, MB; $23 for QC, NB, NF, NS, PEI. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada for our publishing activities.

Editorial

Several years ago, I took a course in spiritual disciplines. It was great to learn more about these ancient practices and to consider which ones might build up my faith today. For our final assignment, we were to learn more about and try-out, one specific practice. To challenge myself, I chose the practice of silence. It was hard, but meaningful. So often we are quick to speak and slow to listen, whether it is with friends or even with God. This time forced me to be silent—to just listen.

So, when my church announced that they were looking for volunteers to pray for an hour, in silence, in the sanctuary, I felt the nudge. I knew I could do it. I knew I needed to do it. So, I signed up for one of the 48 hours that the church was committed too.

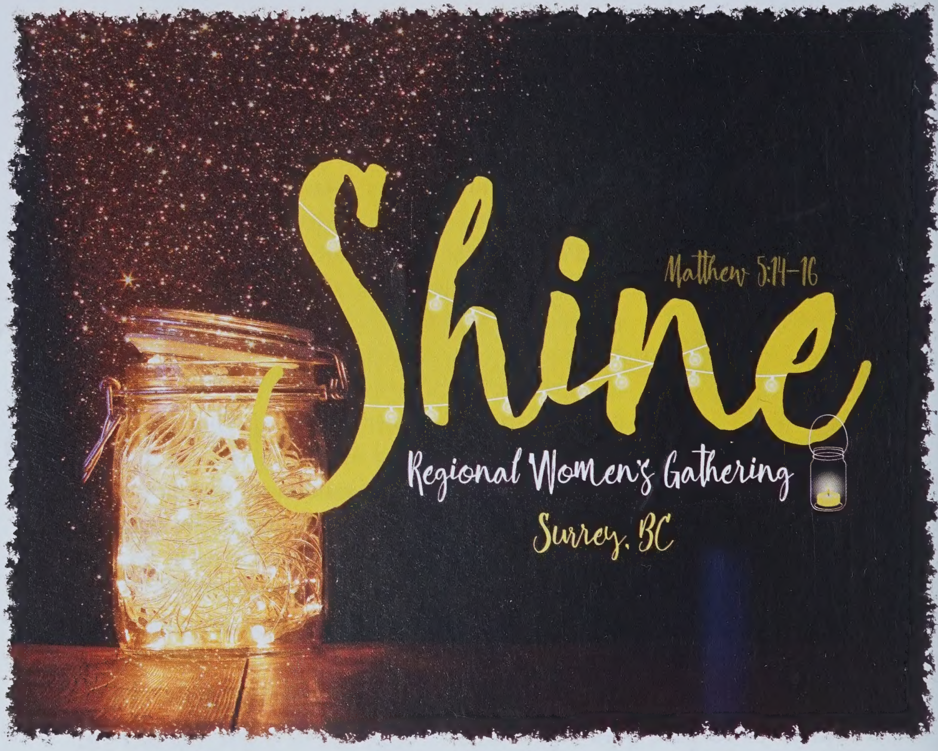
In the end, some amazing volunteers transformed our toddler's room into a prayer centre so it had been moved from our sanctuary. When I walked in, I immediately sat in one of the comfy chairs to just let it all settle in. One wall was covered in paper to create a space to write out prayers to share. In another area, was a large cross. At the base of the cross were pieces of broken tile and a globe, for prayers for our world. Taking a sharpie marker, I shared my prayers for Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe as the cyclone had just hit the region.

There were also band aids to write down a name of a person that could use God's presence and healing. I prayed for a friend as I wrote down her initials and placed the band aid on the cross.

At another spot, there was a place to lie down. In this area, there were shoelaces with knots. As I confessed my sins, I untied the knots and remembered God forgiveness and grace.

Before I knew it, my hour was up. I stayed longer and continued my prayers, sometimes in silence and sometimes while I journaled. There were still things to explore, but at that point I just needed the space and the quiet. This month, may you find your own space of quiet.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.
Ephesians 6:16 (NRSV)



Western Gathering

by Colleen Wood

Our first regional Presbyterian Women's Gathering was a great success!

The conversations started as the first people arrived to register on March 29. Many friends were glad to catch up and new friendships were beginning to form. Many also took the time to browse and purchase from 10,000 Villages and GOGOS (Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign).

The event began with worship and we raised our voices under the capable leadership of Lydia Collin. The music comprised a great selection of new songs (My lighthouse) and old favourites (Jesus bid us shine). We also were inspired through our beautiful stage that shone with lights!

Rev. Laura Kavanagh preached an inspiring sermon as she encouraged us to shine forth the light of God in the world. She reminded us that

God had dealt with the Israelites by showing them grace and choosing them as God's people. God chooses us too. We are to respond by how we treat others. We are to show justice to others, meeting the most basic human needs of the powerless, the oppressed, and the hurting of the world. We are expected to live out the same mercy and grace that we have received from God.

Kavanagh reminded us that we have been created to shine light into the world's darkness! "That mission has not really changed between BC and AD—between the Old and New Testaments—between then and now!" (Kavanagh)

Worship included a meaningful communion led by the Rev. Laura Kavanagh and the Rev. Jenn Geddes. We served one another around our tables.

Following worship, we were challenged by the words of Dr. Mary Jo Leddy. Leddy is a Canadian writer, speaker, theologian, activist, and founder of Toronto's Romero House, a home that welcomes refugees. In her first talk, she focused on her work at Romero House. She spoke of Romero House as being an experiment in neighbourliness. She, along with a few staff, live together with refugees. Together, they learn, open up to gratitude, and recognize the importance of forgiveness.

She asked us if we really believed we could make ourselves shine? Do we really believe we can make the world a lighter and brighter place? She believes we have power and that letting our light shine, grows power. She also spoke of the pain we feel when we realize that we have not let our light shine. We often feel powerless and don't believe enough in ourselves to be light. "If we don't believe we have a light to shine, it won't," says Leddy. It is not too late to take our light out from under the bushel!

Leddy says we sometimes keep our lights hidden for what we think are good reasons. We remain

powerless and think there is an innocence to that. We are suspicious of power, so we do not want to exercise our own power. We need to develop a new sense of power—a creative power. "We can imagine power as the energy to create, the energy to begin, to begin something new, to begin again." When we are in relationship with God, we share God's creative power.

Leddy finished with a powerful quote from Marianne Williamson, "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure."

The afternoon concluded with a wonderful presentation from Hummingbird Ministries. We enjoyed the beautiful singing and dancing of the Hummingbird Singers and Star Blanket Dancers. Hummingbird Ministries is an Indigenous healing ministry located in the lower mainland of BC. It is committed to walking with Indigenous people in their healing journey and to promote healing and reconciliation between Indigenous people and the Church.

The day ended with a wonderful banquet hosted by the Rev. Dr. Nancy Cocks. She tested our knowledge of light by asking us trivia questions about the amount of sunlight received in different parts of the country and the speed of light.

On Saturday, following a buffet breakfast, we began our morning with worship.

Rev. Jenn Geddes recalled a few times she was "left in the dark." (For those in the Toronto area, the blackout of August 2003 might come to mind.) However, sometimes being in the dark is a good thing as it allowed those of us living in the city to see the beauty of the night sky, especially since the annual Perseid meteor shower was present. Many shared their excitement at seeing the 'lights' of the meteors in the dark skies.

Jenn wanted us to consider how we reflect Christ's light in this world. In Corinthians, Paul tells us that we reflect the glory of the Lord. Jenn explained that the Greek word used here for mirror, can also mean, to behold. So, we do not only reflect God's light, but others can behold it in us.

And, we were reminded of the value of light in Jesus' day. We might take light for granted, but when you must go out and purchase oil, candles, or wood and they are expensive and not readily available, light is precious.

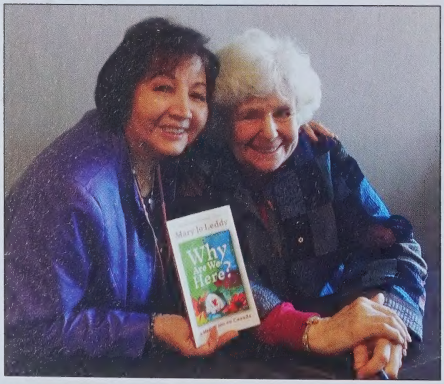
Jesus, referring to us as light, knew how expensive light was. So too, our lives are more valuable than we could ever imagine. It is within our very nature to reflect the light of God.

Yes, things get in the way and cover this light, but when we follow God people see us differently—they see the light. When we are vulnerable, and we work for justice and peace, and when we show compassion and grace, we reflect the light. Jenn says, "We are commissioned, called and appointed to be mirrors of light…. We serve as lights in and to the world. So that others may ooh and aww, at the beauty of God at work in our world."

Following worship, we again were challenged by the words of Mary Jo Leddy. This morning her focus was on life in Canada. She spoke of the Canadian sense of powerlessness that she believes comes from our long

history of colonialism. She would argue, we continue to be a colony, despite our elections and our flag. She would even argue this is why we are so polite, even hesitant people. It has to do with both our history and our current status.

We share a continent with the greatest world power, the American empire. A colony has its focus determined by what goes on elsewhere. The centre of power, even our influences, comes from somewhere else. Even, what we spend time criticizing is often found someplace else. So much of our influence comes from America. So much of what we criticize is in America. We feel relatively powerless and therefore, feel an innocence. Leddy says, "We are good people that are incapable of doing bad things." Those with the power, the Americans, do the bad things. We have no power, and are therefore, innocent.



Leddy gave the example of the Vietnam war. Many Canadians protested the US government's actions yet failed to notice that Agent Orange was being produced by Uniroyal Ltd. in Elmira Ontario.

Often, as a colony, we define ourselves by what we are against. We are anti-American. We don't know what we hold in common as Canadians. All we know is what we love to hate. We have trouble seeing who we are amidst the culture of America. Leddy says to see who we are, we need to see our light…and our darkness. We also need to see Canada through the eyes of those that suffer. We need to think about why we are here 'now' so we can see where we are to shine our light.

Historically, the settlers were here to survive. They created their garrisons to keep them safe from both the elements and the Indigenous Peoples. This mentality still haunts our relationship with our Indigenous Peoples. It meant the loss of a genuine and respectful relationship. Leddy

believes, "All of us who now inhabit this land must let the light of the Indigenous Peoples shine so that this whole land may be enlightened."

With the garrisons as part of our history, Justice Thomas Berger would say that in times of social and economic stress, we resort to them again. When we face threats, such as globalization, we gather together and build walls. These walls of papers and policies, and subtle prejudice, divide us. We want to protect what we have instead of believing we have a light to share with the world.

We have this vast and complex country to find our place in. Leddy says, "It is because of this faith in the Creator that we have the possibility of living in this vastness with a sense of awe and trust." We, as Canadians and Christians, need to find our place in vastness. We can inhabit it with a sense of responsibility. We need to find our right place. We need to find out where we belong and where we can make a difference. We need to let go of thinking we are possessing a place, but to think about the place we are committed to care for. "Celebrate the place where your light can rightly shine," finished Leddy.

Following this time, many purchased Leddy's new book.

After a wonderful buffet lunch, participants attended a variety of forums:

For the Beauty of the Trinity, Lydia Collin

Lydia intermingled teaching, music, and conversation as the group explored the Trinity.

Gifts for the Journey, Sumarme Goble

Sumarme used the wisdom of the Psalms to help participants consider how they want to age. She spoke of the lenses that can be helpful in looking at our past, present, and future.

Lampstands and Bushel Baskets, Exploring the Light of the World, Nancy Cocks

Nancy helped participants

consider how we can be more effective in sharing our light in the world.

sereKNITy dot calm…Spirituality of Knitting, Lisbeth Duncan

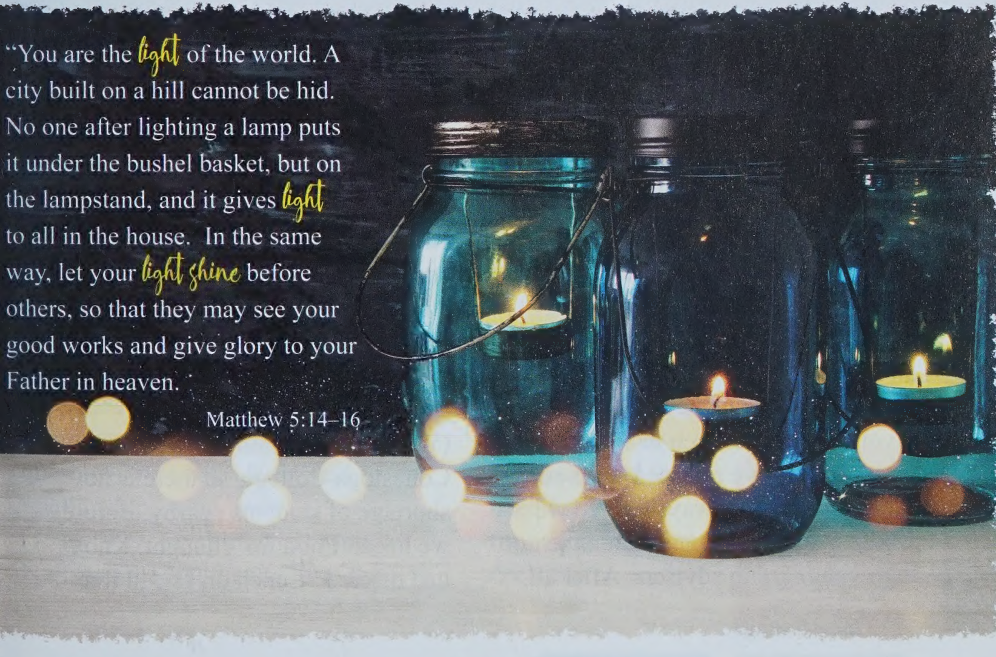
Participants enjoyed some calm in their day as they entered the quiet of the room. They were given slippers to relax. Quiet music and beautiful visuals relaxed them as they considered how to pray with their hands.

When Love Hurts: Understanding Women's Experience of Abuse in Intimate Relationship, Karen McAndless-Davis

Karen began this workshop by sharing some of the myths of abuse, such as this only happens to 'certain' women, that the woman is partly to blame, and that physical abuse is the most serious type of abuse. She also showed the cycle of abuse, speaking of a period of kindness, and a period of tension, and a period of explosion. Abuse affects women in so many ways including depression, fear, anxiety, eating disorders, poverty, forgetfulness, loss of faith, loss of church, and loneliness. She encouraged the church to talk about abuse and learn more about how to support women.

We closed the conference with another lovely meal as we thanked those who attended and provided leadership. We also chatted with our table groups about the event.

A special thank you goes out to the planning team, and all our leadership.



"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14–16

Universit
Ministry

FEEDING ST
BODIES & S

by Nancy Matthews, Knox Waterloo

It all started in Finland. My husband David and I were at a Passion Week retreat near the Russian border. After participating in the Easter observances with our friends, we found ourselves walking alone on an empty road. David and I were discussing how we would be involved in our church in Waterloo, Ontario, once we returned from our sabbatical. I had always figured we would end up doing our turn as senior high youth group advisers. After all, that's what young couples did when I was growing up! But David was a statistics professor and suggested we start a group for university students. And that's how Food for Thought (FFT) was born!

Knox Waterloo is strategically located near two universities (Waterloo and Laurier), plus Conestoga College, so there is no shortage of students nearby. Before we began Food for Thought, Knox had offered "Lunch on Us," a free ge

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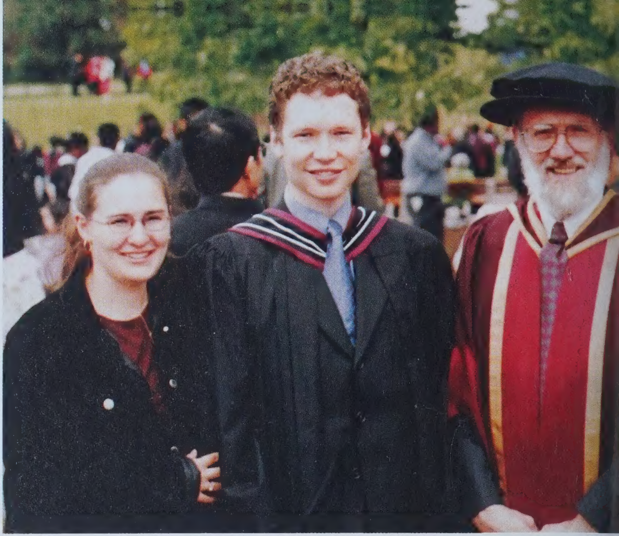
meal after worship for any students who came that morning. But there was no continuity and no study, two things we thought were important. So, we approached John Henderson, the minister at the time, and he said, "Go for it!" That was in 1984, and Knox has been offering a weekly meal and study for students during Fall and Winter terms ever since.

In the first 15 years, we met at the church after worship on Sunday mornings, studying first, eating lunch second. Meals, then as now, were provided by congregational volunteers, and afterwards everyone pitched in to wash dishes and clean up in the church kitchen. We found that some of the best conversations happened while drying dishes. Confidences were shared, important questions were considered, and relationships were built.

In 1999, we shifted to "Monday Nights at the Matthews'" and the students greatly enjoyed being in a home. We turned our table sideways and extended it as necessary with card tables, with anywhere from five to fifteen of us seated together. One night, a student exclaimed, "This is just like Sunday dinner at home!" which we took as a compliment.

We have since moved to Sunday nights at our house, but the familiar pattern continues—members of the congregation cook and deliver the meal, students gather to eat, and two or three take turns doing the dishes by hand. We don't have a dishwasher (although when we have a big crowd, I wish we did!), but often friendships are forged or cemented over the soapy suds and dirty dishes.

Then we assemble in the living room for about 90 minutes of study and discussion. Topics over the years have ranged all over the map—traditional Bible studies on the Psalms, Revelation, parables, Proverbs; a look at the writings of C. S. Lewis; feasts and fasting in the Bible; finding God at the movies; After Graduation, What?; and faith and science fiction/fantasy—just to name a few. We close with intercessory prayer, which often includes concerns for upcoming assignments and exams, sick friends or family members, and the need for wisdom regarding important decisions.



David and I with FFT participants, James Munroe receiving his Master's degree. He is standing with his wife, Amy Palmer.

It has been particularly fun to watch students maturing emotionally and spiritually during their years with us. Since the University of Waterloo has a huge co-op program, many of the FFT undergrads are around for five years, and grad students usually come for one to four. Through the decades we have enjoyed having a large number of international students join our group, bringing interesting perspectives to our discussions. One overseas student called Food for Thought her "other family in Canada," adding that "each night is a celebration filled with love and laughter."

However, our interactions are not limited to hospitality and leading studies. I have often found myself in the role of "mum"—nagging one student to wear a helmet when he rode his bike (he later sent me a photo of himself with appropriate headgear!) or offering a spare pair of gloves on a cold night to those who had lost theirs. Sometimes students have pulled me aside or come to the house on non-FFT days to share heartaches or academic and family troubles. David, meanwhile, periodically provides statistics tutoring for FFT folk who are struggling with that subject. With experience gained over many years at the University of Waterloo, he has also advised on university policies and procedures. In addition, David has happily posed with them in his academic robes when they graduated.

Throughout the years, students frequently stumbled upon Knox en route to the nearby grocery store. That still happens, but these days our church website is the most direct link to our group. And while the majority of Food for Thought participants are in university, we warmly welcome anyone of college and university *age* (usually 18 to 30), whether a student,

working, or in-between. In the beginning, those who attended were only a little younger than I was, but now I am older than their parents! We even had the *daughter* of one of our very first FFT members join us—boy, did that make me feel old!

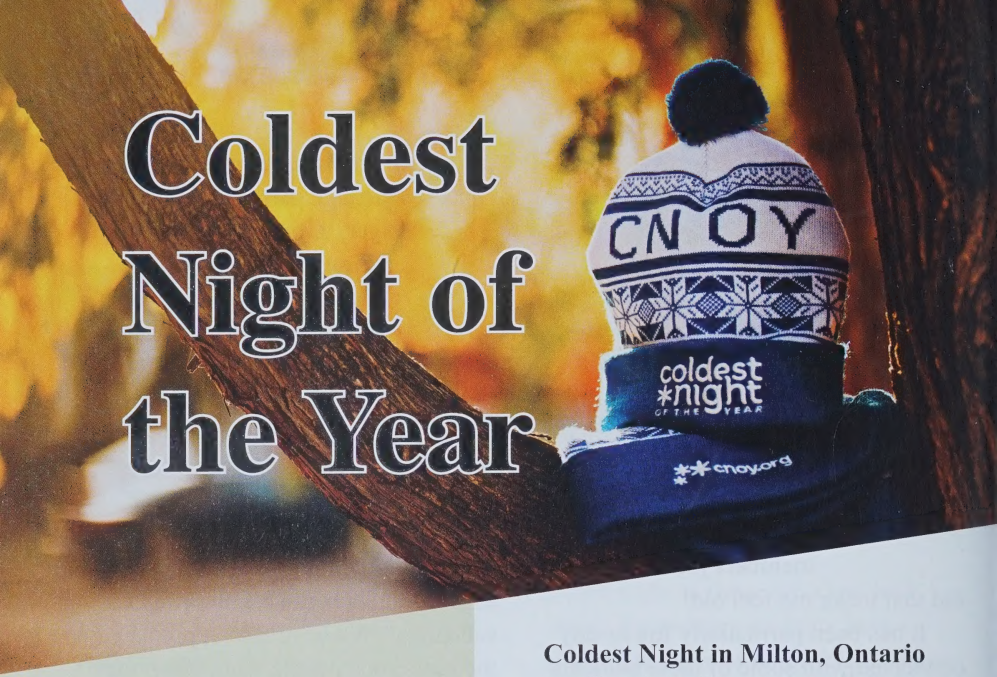
It has been particularly fun to stay connected with some of these students through the decades. We have had the delight of being invited to weddings and receiving birth announcements. We have also visited some FFT alums while travelling in Canada and abroad. It was especially exciting to learn that one couple began a university group at their church in Vancouver, and another started one in St. John's—I joked that Food for Thought was now a coast-to-coast franchise!

During the Winter term, we have often invited speakers from Knox and elsewhere to join us. It's been wonderful to hear their faith stories, and good for the students to get a perspective other than ours. For example, one Fall we looked at Bill Hybels' book *Making Life Work*, which uses Proverbs to examine making wise life choices. That prompted discussions on being wise in choosing friends and marriage partners, managing anger, telling the truth, and making choices in how we spend our money. The following term, we invited speakers to share about the choices they had made in those areas. It was fascinating to hear the faith journeys of our speakers and, I confess, it also gave us a break!

However, David and I haven't handled everything since 1984. Others in the congregation stepped in as FFT leaders when we went away on sabbatical. We have also appreciated the numerous people who, when they met students during worship, made a point of introducing them to us. All these folks, plus the weekly cooks, make Food for Thought work. David and I couldn't do it without them!

Fall 2019 will mark 35 years since FFT started, so we are beginning to think of passing the torch—although maybe Knox's university-age ministry will morph into something else! When I recently mentioned that David and I had met in a church singles' group, one of the FFT students exclaimed, "I'd go to a group like that!" Perhaps Knox could connect with other Waterloo churches of various denominations to offer such a program. And maybe, right now, someone is contemplating what role he or she could play in such a ministry. It doesn't have to happen in Finland!

Coldest Night of the Year



The Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) encourages Canadians of all ages to leave the comfort of their warm homes and to take some time to think about others. Each year, on the last Saturday of February, tens of thousands of Canadians walk two, five, or ten kilometres in their own community. Together, they collect donations for local charity partners who serve vulnerable families in their CNOY community.

With each step, CNOY brings someone closer to "safety, health, and home."

Each year, countless churches participate in the CNOY walk in their community. Let's hear a little about why they walk.

Coldest Night in Milton, Ontario

by Claudette Krauter

The Coldest Night of the Year is the fundraising organizational arm of Blue Sea Foundation, which began operations in 2010 and has since helped to raise $7.9 million for 100 communities across Canada. Blue Sea Foundation organization is dedicated to helping local charities to further their efforts in alleviating poverty and homelessness nation wide.

In Milton, Ontario, the host charity and beneficiary is Milton Transitional Housing. Some years ago, the churches in Milton became alarmed at how many people were losing their homes as a result of job losses. People who needed a hand up. People who needed shelter housing while they got another job and became re-established in the community. A charity was formed and the first Milton, Coldest Night of the Year Walk, was held.

Nassagaweya Presbyterian Church became involved through their membership in MACCWT (Milton Area Christian Churches Working Together). In 2014, a group from Nassagaweya set out on the walk around Milton. Some walked the two-kilometre walk, some the five-kilometre walk and two intrepid walkers even took on the ten-kilometre walk (the street markers had been accidently moved so they actually walked 15 kilometres)!

It was a bitterly cold day with ice on the sidewalks so thick we had to walk on the road. It was a time of great comradery with hundreds of people from many local companies and churches, sporting identical hats, talking and laughing and dodging cars and ice. We were welcomed home with thanks, hot soup, and goodies. Many stayed around just to meet old friends, catch up on the latest news, and generally bask in our day's accomplishment.

Walking for Our Neighbours

Grace Presbyterian Church at Coldest Night of the Year

by Tyler Williams

Grace Presbyterian Church, with a healthy dose of encouragement from our team captain, has been gathering walkers and donations for the Coldest Night of the Year Calgary Downtown for four years. Grace is a century-old church located in Calgary's Beltline neighbourhood, where the challenge of affordable and adequate housing is a significant issue for not only our city but for the immediate community around us.

Participating in the CNOY is a great way for us to support our neighbours—the organizations that serve the community and the individuals they help as well. Funds from the Calgary Downtown walk support the Feed the Hungry Program just down the road at St. Mary's, and the KAIROS Calgary Affordable Housing Group (of which Grace is a member) that has a property just a few minutes away.

The 2019 walk was one of our best yet. The Grace Presbyterian Go-Getters team grew this year to include 33 hearty members, and together they were able to raise over $7000. In conversations after the walk and over a bowl of warm chilli, team members shared that they walked for the sense of community and the opportunity to work with like-minded individuals from other organizations to tackle a bigger issue. For some, it was an opportunity to step outside of their comfort and to be reminded of the necessity of simple things like heated shelter (the temperature in Calgary was –16°C during the walk).

The Rev. Dr. Nick Athanasiadis, Grace's Lead Minister, shared, "We walk so that for a tiny fraction of time we raise our awareness of what it is

coldest*night
OF THE YEAR . ORG
CNOY
CALGARY
DOWNTOWN
IT'S COLD OUT THERE!

Photos by Mark Durieux

like to be out in the cold. But our time outside has a beginning and an end. We feel good, supported, warmed by good company, good clothing, and a warm meal at the end. Then we go back home. But those whom we want to reach out to in this walk do not have all this. That the walk raises funds towards building a future where everyone has a warm place to return to after being out in the cold is important."

For Grace, participation in the walk extends beyond those who can lace up their hikers. This year, Grace's ministers engaged the broader congregation by setting several fundraising targets and attaching some incentives to reach those goals. As a result, the ministers are each wearing a Coldest Night toque all day, every day, for a week, and in the coming weeks they'll be colouring a streak of their hair blue.

Even our Children and Youth Ministry got involved and made a commitment to give their weekly offerings to our Coldest Night of the Year team. The children really grasped the idea that when it is as cold as it has been outside, it is especially difficult for people with barriers to proper housing and adequate food. They wanted to help.

"We challenged them to help

the church reach their fundraising goal, and told them that if they were successful, the ministers would have to wear a toque for an entire week," said the Rev. Maren McLean Persaud, Associate Minister, Children and Youth. "I think they especially loved imagining all the scenarios where wearing a toque would be awkward!"

Children and youth were also encouraged to participate in the walk. In total, the church school raised $151, and some families came out to walk with the team. After helping the team surpass their fundraising goal, the children and youth now proudly wear their Coldest Night of the Year pins, knowing that they have made a difference.

For the past three years, Grace has been imagining and living its new vision and mission that's encouraging us to move beyond our walls to build a stronger connection with the Beltline neighbourhood and beyond. The Grace Presbyterian Go-Getters are showing us what that vision can look like in practice, and we are already looking forward to participating again next year and walking in support of our neighbours.

Erindale Presbyterian Church at The Coldest Night of the Year

by Jen Sokolowsky

Although 2019 has been one of frigid temperatures and lots of snow in Mississauga, this year's walk took place on a pleasantly mild night. In fact, as we walked we dodged a good number of puddles resulting from the melting snow. Of course, this weather reminded us of how many people who aren't simply out for the five-kilometre walk, but those who struggle to find shelter night after night, in cold and mild temperatures alike.

At this year's walk, Erindale was represented by two preschoolers, two young moms, and three grandfathers. We collected $1000 toward the more than $60,000 total that was raised for The Dam (Develop, Assist & Mentor), a Mississauga organization that partners with youth to create inclusive community where all are welcomed, valued, and respected.

We have been participating in this walk for three years, and it is an important part of our mission and outreach at Erindale. We believe in being engaged in our community in meaningful ways. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with such an incredible organization as The Dam, which offers practical support to vulnerable young people.

Here are some reflections from some Erindale Walkers:

- "I feel we (with work, money, family, and friends) are sheltered from the problems of the hungry, homeless, and the hurting, and the CNOY brings this harsh reality to mind. I like that participation in CNOY gets us involved in walking and asking others to support our efforts further increases visibility and support for this great cause. In particular, I feel that supporting The Dam Youth Drop-In is a great way to make a positive long-term impact right here, in our own back yard."

~Paul

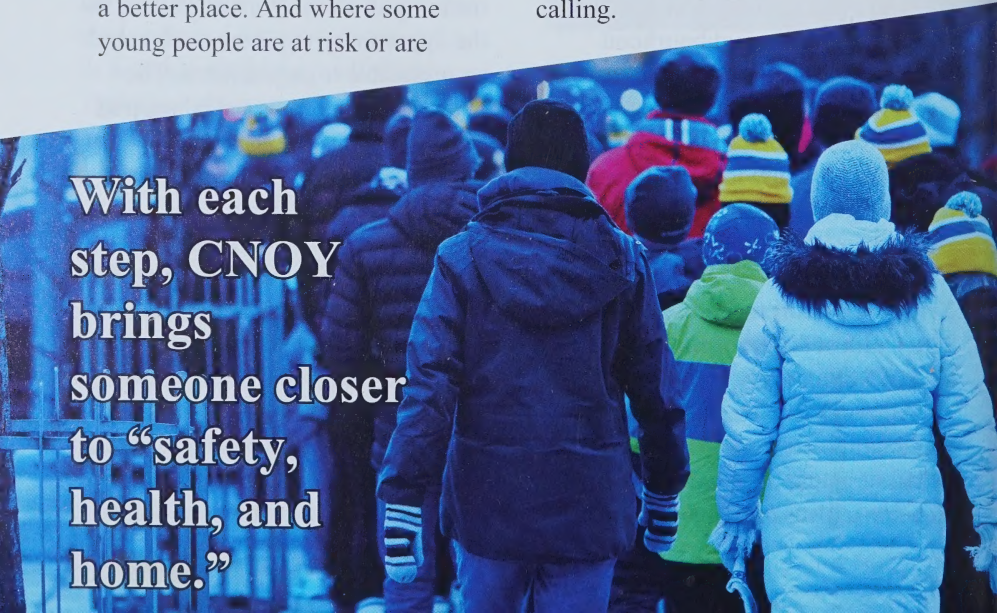
- "It's a great thing to do with the family each year. Grayson (age 3) has already asked a few times when the next "long walk" will be happening. It's a good opportunity to talk as a family about how fortunate we are to have a warm home to live in, food to eat, and love to share. Not everyone is as fortunate, and we have the opportunity to help change that. It's a great opportunity for the community to come together and support one another."

  ~Sherri-Lynn
- "I believe that all young people are critical in making the future world a better place. And where some young people are at risk or are disadvantaged, places like The Dam can make a positive difference in their lives and help them succeed in life. And with more successful young people, I am sure the world will be an amazing place."

  ~Dale, grandfather

For me personally, the CNOY walk is a reminder that we are being called by God to walk alongside with those who are hurting. As the more than 200 participants gathered in Mississauga, it gave witness to the fact that though I may only be one person, and Erindale may only be one small church, as we join together with our community, other churches, other faith groups, and other organizations, we can make a huge impact for good.

As Micah 6:8 reminds us, we are to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. CNOY is one way we strive to live into this calling.


With each step, CNOY brings someone closer to "safety, health, and home."

World Day of Prayer

by Cathy Reid

In Canada, the World Day of Prayer (WDP) is organized by the Women's Inter-Church Council (WICC) of Canada. The motto is Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action. The ecumenical services are usually held on the first Friday of March each year. The International World Day of Prayer Committee states, "It is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice."

The origins date back to the early 19th Century when US and Canadian Christian women started working together to support women's involvement in mission at home and abroad. The following is a timeline showing how WDP was formed.

1812	Women encouraged one another to pray together.
1887	Presbyterian women in US called for a National Day of Prayer.
1895	Anglican women in Canada set aside a National Day for Missions.
1918	In the aftermath of the First World War, Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian women called an inter-church meeting which led to a day of prayer in January 1920.
1922	Canadian and US committees agreed to use the same theme for the Day of Prayer.
1927	The title was shortened to World Day of Prayer.

Today, Christian women and men in over 170 countries unite to pray for justice for women and children. Each year in a different host country, a team of women prepares the content, highlighting its culture and justice issues. A list of the host countries is available on the Women's Inter-Church Council website at wicc.org

The host country in 2019 was Slovenia. This country held its first World Day of Prayer in 2000. The service was very moving and was much appreciated by everyone who attended.

In 2020, the service will be prepared by the women of Zimbabwe.

WDP is an amazing opportunity to pray alongside over 75,000 Canadians and millions of global participants. In addition to the power of prayer, learning, and fellowship, the offerings from these services fund program work with grassroots projects for women in the following areas: violence against women, economic justice, health, education, racism, and peace.

From the WDP offering in 2018, the WICC was able to fund $80,000 for projects in Canada and abroad. Grant applications have to be submitted to WICC by March 31 each year and grants are awarded in July.

World Day of Prayer at Stroud

by Eileen Robinson

Friday, March 1, turned out to be a bright, wintry day as I made my way to Stroud Presbyterian Church for the World Day of Prayer service.

As I entered the sanctuary, the sun shone through the beautiful stained-glass windows and peaceful music was being played by the talented Ruth Obando. A table was decorated with some symbols of the theme country Slovenia, including grapes, embroidery, and carnations.

Through the different readings, I

The Painting: Artist's Statement

by Rezka Arnuš

"I wanted to present two topics: the country of Slovenia and the main biblical story of the worship service. On the top of the picture one can see the movement of women in the Slovenian traditional costumes covered with a lace cap, mob cap, or scarf.

"The semicircular ornament with Slovenian folk embroidery represents a plate or a table with our best known national dish, a cake—potica. Grapes are from vineyards from different Slovenian wine-producing regions. As a souvenir and an expression of love, the table is decorated with a licitar heart made with the honey of native Carniola bees, and a Slovenian carnation flower.

"Partly under the table, one can see children from the margins of society. They have heard the invitation to the feast. A woman who is homeless carries a child in her arms; a woman who is blind, with arms in front, already prepares to take a step; a learned about the everyday difficulties that the women of Slovenia encounter. Many had suffered discrimination and lack of opportunity to pursue what we consider the basics of life—education, work, decent wages, and acceptance. Yet through the challenges these women face, they still found their strength in their faith in God who would be there for them, every step of the way.

In our own society, here in Canada, we see these same problems facing some in our community. In the scripture passage, we learned of the radical hospitality shown by the rich man at his banquet. It stressed to me the importance of Christians, everyday people like me, to show the same kind of hospitality to all those around us. We need to show our love for Christ through our actions, and to be more attentive and supportive to those around us in difficult situations.

The hymns we sang, Song of Joy, Now thank we all our God, and Lead on O King eternal, helped reinforce the important message of this prayer service. I left the service feeling inspired and determined to continue to share and show my faith through actions not just words. I added Slovenia to my prayer list which I keep at my bedside. I will include it in my daily nighttime ritual. Attending the service was a wonderful experience and one I will remember for a long time. Thank you, God, for the love you have shown all of us and help me to do the same.

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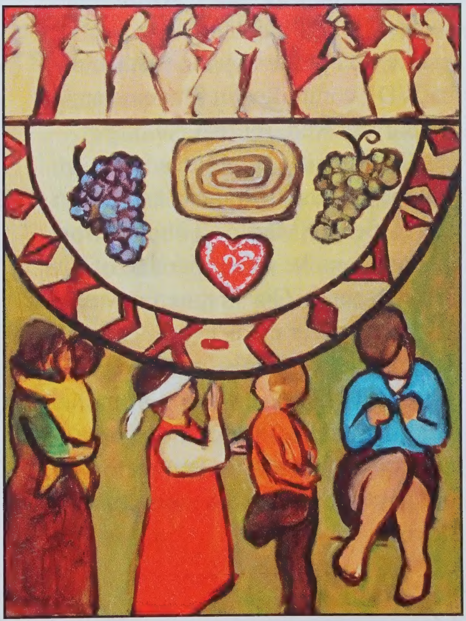
person who is deaf responds by changing the position of his head; with her involuntary movements, a girl with spastic cerebral palsy shows her joyous acceptance of the invitation to the banquet.

"I used red and white, the colours of Slovenian folk embroidery. The green background colour emphasizes the green Slovenian fields and forests. The warm colours of children express the joy of heartfelt invitation."



World Day of Prayer at Trenton

by Doreen Dath

WDP is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome everyone to join in prayer and action for peace and justice.

In 2018, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Trenton hosted the service after which the Church that will be host in the following year is selected. St. James Fellowship (Anglican) Church, a newly planted church in Trenton, hosted the 2019 WDP. Planning each year begins in late January/ early February when the invites are sent out to all Christian churches in our community to attend a planning meeting at the host church.

At that meeting, those present select portions of the service to participate in. The year's theme was Come—Everything is Ready. The service was written by the women of the WDP committee in Slovenia and our prayers were for that country.

The planning committee in Trenton selects the hymns, and this year's speaker Marilou Timpson from St. James, spoke on the parable of The Great Banquet. Our first hymn was, His banner over me is love. Readers representing women's voices in Slovenia (who were women from the various churches) spoke throughout the service. The stories that were told gave a picture of the women in Slovenia.

An offering was collected for the WICC. The service is traditionally held in the evening on the first Friday of March. Following the service, the host church provided refreshments, which included some recipes from the country of Slovenia.

Unfortunately, not all the churches in Trenton attended the planning meeting and because the service is led by women, very few men come to the WDP service. This year, we were happy to report that there was a male youth (my grandson) and an adult male who took part in the service.

World Day of Prayer at Ottawa

by Patricia Grainger

To celebrate the World Day of Prayer this year, a small group from St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Kars went to St. James United Church in the village of Osgoode, Ontario, for an ecumenical service with our neighbouring United and Anglican Churches.

About 25 of us worshipped together as we followed the service prepared by the women of Slovenia. The welcoming invitation of Come—Everything is Ready was felt by each of us as we arrived. The text of the Call to Prayer was moving and the stories of the five Slovenian women gave us a glimpse into their everyday life.

We relaxed to the peaceful, uplifting music that was interspersed during this part of the service. The repetition of the sung response of, Now let us all God's love receive, reinforced the message that God's house and God's table are open to everyone. These words gave the service a global significance beyond all that was presented about Slovenia.

We enjoyed watching the accompanying video as we learned about the history of the country, the terrain and wildlife, the health and welfare of the Slovenes, the food and religion of the country, and the importance placed on providing free education.

After the worship, all were invited to gather for tea, coffee, and a variety of delicious sweet treats, including a traditional Slovenian walnut loaf made by one of the ladies of the United Church. It was very tasty, not heavy, and added an extra special something to our Slovenian get-away!

World Day of Prayer in Langley

by Betty Siverns

The World Day of Prayer was held on March 1. The service was prepared by the women of Slovenia, a first for them. They have been participated in this event since 2000.

The service was quite a banquet. It was a feast of learning, a feast of love, and a feast of joy in the knowledge of God's forgiveness.

We were greeted in Slovic: "Dober dan" (Good day), then were introduced to the country of Slovenia, and given a brief history of the country during and after WWII. We were also amazed at the insightful art of Rezka Arnus. How does a person with only 5% vision produce such beautiful creations?

Our meal then started with prayer and thanksgiving for the people and country of Slovenia, and with a reminder to see those nearby who also need out attention. We were then served with the stories of five women of Slovenia and were reminded of the many ways that lives are harmed by circumstances beyond their control.

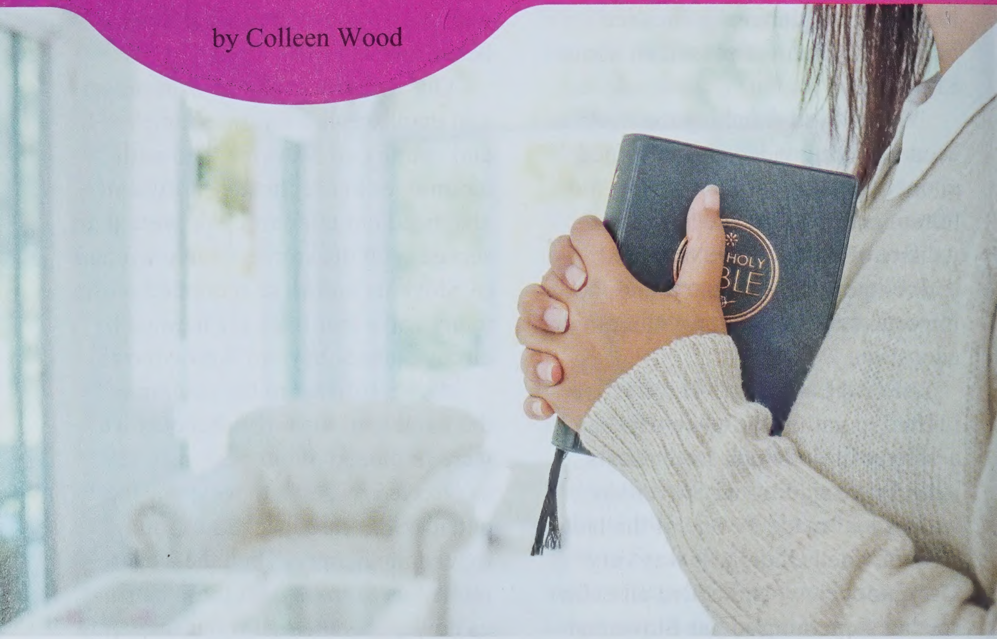
As we listened to the reading of the Parable of the Great Banquet we were reminded of our responsibility as directed by Jesus to welcome the outsiders, to care for the sick, and to feed the hungry. Then the leader invited us to share with those close to us how we would feel if our invitation was rejected. Who would we invite to our banquet?

Finally, as we gave thanks for the banquet we had enjoyed, through the words of women of various ages, we sang of being grateful for God's love and forgiveness. We were then dismissed with a blessing and The Lord's Prayer.

Of course, no banquet ends without food for the body as well as for the spirit! A delicious spread of savory and sweet delights awarded us as we left the sanctuary for a time of fellowship.

Finding a Space

by Colleen Wood



In my editorial, I spoke about the amazing prayer room that had been created in our church. It left me craving space and quiet in my own home.

So, I am beginning to create my own 'portable' prayer space. I haven't decided if it will be a physical space, but I have seen others make space in a closet, hang things on the back of a door, or just use a tiny corner of their house. For now, I am just gathering my things into a basket as I often sit in my front room to pray, either before the children wake up, or after they leave for school.

Here are some ideas to get you started, but obviously choose what is most meaningful for you and appropriate for your space:

A Map or Globe

In praying for our world, I really like to have a visual of the world. You can buy a map of the world, print one out on your computer, or buy an inexpensive globe.

A Cross

Again, this can be a picture or a physical cross. Mine is a cross I bought many years ago in Nicaragua which is very small, only about three inches high. I like that it fits in my hand. Alternatively, a cross you can hang takes almost no space.

A Candle

I like to light a candle to begin my time, reminding me that Christ, the light of the world is with me. I blow my candle out at the end, but many like to snuff the candle out as it produces a lovely column of smoke that reminds them that Christ goes out from this time and space.

If you prefer, even a battery-powered candle can be meaningful!

A Bible and Journal

Obviously, you need a Bible and I like a journal for writing down my thoughts and prayers. If you are a reader, you might like to include devotional books, inspirational books, and even commentaries.

A Chair or Pillows

I like to kneel to pray at times, so for me, pillows are great. For others, find a comfy chair that will fit the space. I also like blankets in my space as I often get cold when I am sitting in prayer. (One of these days, I will request a prayer shawl from my church!)

Music

I don't generally like music when I pray, but with a busy house, I have found it necessary to drown out other noises.

Inspirational Items

Some of the other things you might want in your space are pictures of friends and families, colouring sheets, rocks, post-it notes, prayer beads, a finger labyrinth, plants, or inspirational pictures.

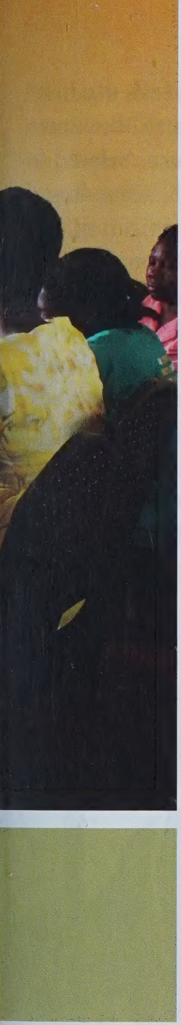
I understand that perhaps I am making prayer too hard. Truly, God hears us whenever we call, even before that. Yet, for me, time and space set aside strengthen my prayer life. I would love to hear how you keep your prayer life active. Do you pray in the morning or at night? Do you have a special space or format? If you create a space, what are you putting into the space?

it's just not Fair

by Dr. Eve Nakamembe and Rebecca Collett

"Doctor this way…the mother I need you to see is this side…" she said, interrupting my thoughts. It was the in-charge midwife of Mityana Hospital, a hospital about 70 kilometres west of Uganda's capital city, Kampala. She ushered me swiftly past several other moms-to-be, behind the private curtains labelled 'With support from Save the Mothers.' This label was a glimpse of hope in this labour ward, where tragedy might lurk at each bed.

I found myself with Monica, a 27-year old, who had just given birth to her second child. I scanned her chart



quickly and saw that she had severe complications—extremely high blood pressure and convulsions. I was numb.

As an obstetrician-gynecologist leading the Save the Mothers' "Mother Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative," I have attended to so many mothers and newborns through my career, but it still gets to me when I see it. The sight of a mother desperately fighting for her life and for the lives of the children she might leave behind always grips me!

Even several years on, I can remember my initial shock at the state of this poor woman. I made the diagnosis of post-partum eclampsia and began care. But this hospital lacked what I needed to help Monica. None of the life-saving medicines or essential tools that I needed were on hand—even gloves were in short supply. My feet froze. I knew everything that needed to be done, but my hands were tied! What could I do, without the equipment?

The lack of equipment and supplies was no surprise in this case. Sadly, this is a daily reality at many health centres across the developing world. According to the data available in the Ugandan National Health survey, only 49 percent of hospitals in Uganda are well equipped with drugs, equipment, and skilled personnel to offer comprehensive emergency obstetric and newborn care services. Only 14 percent of facilities have fully functional and well-maintained equipment. Resources are meagre.

As I said a silent prayer, I glimpsed a young man in grief and fear. His face is still etched in my memory. The in-charge midwife discretely advised me that this man was Monica's brother. His fear was matched only by his feelings of guilt. He had been given a list of medicines to buy, but he could not afford them. He had spent all his money on transportation to bring Monica to the hospital from their remote village, where the clinic could not help her or her little baby, who had died already. Monica's brother reminded me of so many families in Uganda who struggle to help their wife, sister, or mother to access what-even-seems like the most basic care.

I fought like a wounded lion to save Monica's life so that she would be able to return to her living child: a four-year-old daughter. But I knew my efforts were in vain.

We could not help Monica. Her complications were too extreme. She was transferred to the National Referral Hospital, but we lost her two days later.

I knew things had to change.

Thanks to Canadians they have. Canadians have been supporting Save the Mothers, a Canadian-Ugandan international Christian charity that aims to reduce maternal and child mortality in East Africa. With the help of generous Canadians, a High Dependency Unit (HDU) was brought to Mityana Hospital. An HDU is an acute care room complete with tools that can help women with abnormal bleeding and high blood pressure, like Monica, to live. I have seen an incredible change in this hospital. The senior doctors at Save the Mothers also trained the nurses and midwives to know how to address complex obstetric emergencies. The lead midwife recently told me that now many mothers with high blood pressure, like Monica, had been saved with help from Save the Mothers.

I am so thrilled to report that introducing the equipment and new protocols have been a great success. In October 2018, this hospital was ranked among the top ten health facilities in Uganda.

But, there are still many tragedies in Uganda and beyond. Tragedies that we could quickly address with resources.

It's just not fair. It breaks my heart that still, every day, about 830 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, according to the World Health Organization. Most of these deaths—99 percent of them—occur in the developing world.

It is one of the world's great injustices. In Canada, when a woman faces an obstetric emergency, she will have access to care. Everything will be done to save her. But, as a physician in Uganda, too often I find myself saying, "If only the drugs needed to save her were available…,"

"If only the blood pressure machines were readily available…," "If only the health workers were regularly mentored…," "If only we had saved her life, her brother would still have a sister and her daughter would have a mother…." This is an issue of poverty. This is a social justice issue.

But, little by little, at hospitals like the one in Mityana, Save the Mothers is working with local governments to ensure that care is available for some of the world's most vulnerable women. Mortality rates are gradually dropping through Uganda. This gives me hope. I pray that one day, losing a mother in childbirth in Uganda will be a very rare tragedy. With faith, I am confident it will.

Dr. Eve Nakamembe is the Director of Save the Mothers' Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative and is an Obstetrician-Gynecologist practicing in Uganda. Rebecca Collett is the Director of Communications for Save the Mothers Canada. To learn more about Save the Mothers, visit savethemothers.org or find them at www.facebook.com/savethemothers.

Mission In Action

Blair and Vivian Bertrand
Malawi

Blair and Vivian Bertrand have been sending updates on the recent floods in Malawi. Here are exerts from their updates from March 12–15.

Flooding Crisis in Malawi, March 12

There's an image that has been making the rounds on social media. It is a bridge that we have crossed a number of times. It is the main way in and out of the southern regions of Malawi. It is large enough that it will survive, but it is dangerous to cross at the moment due to severe flooding in the area.

The most recent reports put the number of affected at 250,000. That is likely an educated guess considering that Malawi has a hard time keeping track of its population at the best of times.

Now the really difficult part begins. Close to half a million people live in compromised housing, many with contaminated water and without adequate food. The population of Malawi is incredibly young: 46% of the population is under 15, so that half a million includes about 200,000 children.

Getting relief to the flooded area is complicated by at least two factors. First, it isn't like there are warehouses nearby filled with necessary supplies. When an entire country lives close to the margin, there are no surplus essentials that are not already getting used. There is no ocean access for large quantities of goods. The closest

"international" airport recently had some flights suspended in/out of it because of its safety. It is open now but still, not a major hub. And driving is very difficult. So, no access to necessary goods and difficult circumstances to get them there.

This will require complicated planning.

Second, while there are lots of NGOs and implementing organizations on the ground here, this is an extraordinary event. Organizations can only respond when they know what is going on and that still isn't clear. There are very few helicopters in the country for instance. Getting to some of these places is hard. Then, once they assess they can then appeal to the broader international community. Once the large organizations step in with emergency funding then things will start to move along but they are a few days from that yet.

The past September, both the Moderator (Rev. Daniel Cho) and the General Secretary (Rev. Ian Ross McDonald) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada visited CARD projects in Nsanje (the heart of the flooding). The PCC is a member of the ACT Alliance and has supported CARD's efforts in the past. The delegation visited a solar irrigation project for small scale farmers. These men were the executive of a larger group of farmers:

These are the people who will have to give local leadership for months and years to come. They already are. CARD helps them lead better.

The old adage that if you give a person a fish they eat for a day but if you teach them to fish they eat forever, is true. In relief it is not either/or. It needs to be both/and. People need to eat now; people need long term efforts to rebuild and make a better life.

Flooding Crisis in Malawi Continues, March 13

The coming days hold some threat. I can't find the weather bulletin at the moment but essentially there is another storm coming across Mozambique and it will hit the southern region again. The rains aren't supposed to last as long but they are potentially heavy.

Finally, I think it is important for people to realize that while the flooding is isolated, the damage done to houses is widespread and extensive. At every organization I am in contact with people have either lost homes or immediate family members have. For example, at TEEM, one staff lost a home, another had three siblings lose a home, another had an elderly aunt lose a home, and yet another had a child lose a home.

By losing a home I mean that the foundation gave way so a wall collapsed. Or a roof was inadequate and the walls got wet enough that they gave way. Or the roof gave way and the dirt floor flooded leading to the base of walls giving out. At times it is only one section of a house but it makes the rest insecure and open to the environment.

On Thursday I will go into Ndirande with Hamilton Banda to see damage done in one of the poorest areas of Blantyre. Latrines seem especially vulnerable which only makes the chances of a cholera outbreak even greater.

Flooding Crisis in Malawi Update, March 14

Numbers, as of Tuesday March 12:

- 56 deaths and 577 injuries have been recorded
- 3 people are missing
- 184,589 households (approximately 922,945 people) have been affected
- 16,545 households have been displaced

(Malawi Government@MalawiGovt) March 13, 2019)

Again, to remind, 46% of Malawians are under 25 so those numbers include large numbers of children.

Three things that came up a number of times today.

First, many Malawians blame their own construction methods. Few houses are made to withstand the deluge that we received. The majority of Malawians live in brick or mud brick homes. When visitors come they are surprised by this. We were as well.

You drive along and see whole "slums" made from brick houses. It makes sense though. Malawi has a lot of dirt and clay. This means a lot of bricks. Unfortunately, many Malawians can't afford commercially fired bricks. Instead they either use bricks fired in home-made kilns or make their own and dry them in the sun. Once water hits these home-made bricks they weaken, crumble, and eventually turn back to dirt and mud. While the government recognizes this and has tried to control brick manufacturing and home construction, like many things in Malawi there is next to no implementation or enforcement. There are no enforced standards for home construction and therefore those who are poor will use inadequate and unsafe techniques to get shelter for their families.

Second, one of the big fears is what the floods did to crops. It is hard to over-estimate the impact that agriculture has on daily life in Malawi. This one sector employs 3/4 of Malawians.

This year was supposed to be a bumper crop. In four districts most flooded the estimates have gone from a 30-90 percent increase from last year to either hold steady with last year or a decrease.

Which leads to the third thing people are worried about: inflation. Over the past couple of years, the inflation rate has leveled off at around 10 percent. This is in stark contrast to the just under 38 percent it hit in

2013. Some economists attribute this to a tight monetary policy by the Reserve Bank of Malawi. Others point to adequate maize supplies. As such a large sector of the economy and a daily staple for the majority of Malawians, maize has a disproportionate effect on the economy. A bad maize year can drag down the economy, escalating inflation to dangerous levels. By diminishing the yield, the floods potentially also destabilize the Malawian economy.

Rain Damage in Blantyre, March 15

Malawi has a very large rural population so it is understandable that most of the relief efforts will focus there. Here in Blantyre, a city of just under a million people, there are still many problems and challenges. I want to introduce you to four people who live in Ndirande, an area stretching around the base of Ndirande Moutain. For many years The Presbyterian Church in Canada has supported a club, the Ndirande Handicapped Centre (formerly known as Tidzalerana) that hosts Malawians with various disabilities.

Shakira can't walk. As you look around the pictures you will see that nothing is wheelchair accessible. This includes the path to the latrine. Each time Shakira needs to go, her mother carries her the 25 meters. In the rains Shakira's brick latrine melted. The temporary latrine is surrounded by corrugated steel. The pile of dirt in front is the old latrine, now dissolved. Shakira keeps getting cuts as she goes in an out the makeshift door.

Beatrice has another problem: three of four walls are gone on her house. As an adult who can't walk there is not a lot of work for her. This means not a lot of income which in turn means sub-standard construction material. Although the community has started to rebuild, these new bricks are dug from the ground and, when it rains, they will return to the ground.

One thing that Beatrice has that her neighbours don't is a good latrine. There were floods in Malawi in 2015 and in response, Presbyterian World Service & Development supported the construction of new latrines for club members. Besides giving Beatrice some basic human dignity, latrines that can withstand the rain make a significant contribution to community health. When human sewage floods there is a greater risk of cholera. There is no running water in large tracts of Ndirande. Residents rely on water trucks or more convenient sources like puddles and streams. Beatrice's latrine at least protects the water sources closest to her.

Madalitso is likely in the most common situation in urban areas. Like Beatrice she also has a PWS&D latrine. Her house withstood more of the rain than others. A corner of her house fell outwards, thankfully not hurting anyone. She has put as much plastic sheeting over the most vulnerable places so that when the rains come again she might keep what remains of her house.

Finally, Cornelius. Upon arriving at his house he immediately lit up and hugged Hamilton Banda, a staff person at the club. As someone with Down Syndrome, Cornelius would have a very low chance of independent living. He lives with his family, but it is obvious that the larger community means the world to him.

His family's home lost one end. Hamilton, my guide on this trip, had an animated conversation with Cornelius' mother. She wanted me to know that two of the walls had been reinforced in 2015 using PWS&D funds. She banged them to demonstrate that they were solid. I'm no architect or engineer but I know my way around a blueprint. Both walls were load bearing and I'm convinced that if they were not reinforced, the whole house would have collapsed.

Cornelius has his own room. When I arrived, it was being used to dry clothes but both he and his mother wanted me to see what concerns them most. There is a ridge line on the roof and a crack has developed in the wall. This wall has been safe so far, but the crack has widened recently. At the other end is a reinforced wall. This mother's concern for her son's safety was obvious.

March 29

Vivian sent an update on March 29 to say that relief agencies are working in high gear. She says that the disaster is too small for any person, organization, or even consortium of organizations to fix, so she prays to ask God to do more than we can ask or imagine.

For more information and updates, visit http://pccweb.ca/missionblog/

Climbing a Holy Mountain

by Kenn Stright

There is something about mountains that draws people of faith—Moses, Elijah, Jesus and countless others climb whatever mountain is nearby or one that by custom and tradition is considered 'holy'. The Celts often found mountains to be associated with 'thin spaces,' the place where heaven and earth are so close they almost touch.

Its early morning and we prepare for today's journey. My wife, Jeanne, and I are newly arrived from Canada in October 2018 as guests of Zolozolo Presbyterian Church located in the city of Mzuzu in the northern region of Malawi. Yesterday, we were invited to join members of the congregation heading out on a pilgrimage to Kaningina Mountain, which is just about the closest mountain to the city and the destination of many seeking a sacred place to fast and pray. The folks sounded a little hesitant in the invitation to us as the climb up the mountain was said to be strenuous. They were concerned that we hadn't acclimatized to Malawi yet and that we were over 60-years-old and in Malawi that is verging on ancient.

But shortly after daybreak, Jeanne and I gathered with over 40 others waiting for the transport that usually carried workers to the fields. No riding in back for us—pastors got a seat in front (over our protests). After a few kilometres over rough roads our protests faded and we were grateful for the seat, though most of the springs had long ago given up.

The trip was accompanied by prayer, singing, and greetings shouted near and far. The sun was just getting hot as we got ourselves ready to climb the mountain, a climb that was made easier by having no need to carry food or water. This was to be a time of prayer and fasting, teaching and counselling, healing and learning. The climb was also made much easier by the endless conversations with our

companion pilgrims. They did think our red faces might have been caused by the sun, but I assured them it had more to do with the climb.

The view from the top was breathtaking as Northern Malawi unfolded before us. Long before our arrival, hundreds of others had come, some spending the night, others claiming a space since sunrise. We had little time to appreciate the view as we settled into our new home for the day. Someone had built a booth in our location; a hut crudely made yet still somehow spoke of 'home.' It soon became obvious why this was considered a sacred place and a sacred space.

The day was loosely structured to follow an order of service. It took us through a liturgy that was intense and powerful. Singing, always singing. Singing to call us to worship. Singing to call us to prayer. Singing to call us to simply celebrate and let our hearts rejoice. Specific instructions were given as to the direction of our prayers. We were called to pray for individual needs and for the government. We prayed for the upcoming election. We were called to pray for our struggles against the darkness, against the evil forces in the world. Special prayers were made for the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the challenges it faces.

Along with instruction in prayer there was a teaching time. So, the newly-arrived pastor from Canada was expected to lead in the teaching for the next hour or so. I spoke on stories of mountains—the transfiguration became our focus. We walked the mountain with Moses and reflected on the giving of the law; we were with Elijah during his prophetic quest; and we remembered Jesus who retreated to the hills and mountains. On this occasion, Jesus brought his inner circle of disciples with him. They wanted this experience to last forever, seeking the permanence of 'booths' to capture the moment. But such moments as we experienced on the mountain could not be captured—only embraced. Oh, and I didn't speak for an hour. Everything had to be translated into Tumbuka, which was the heart language of most of the pilgrims.

The hours moved on and the intense sun became the heat of the afternoon, followed by the sudden cold and wet of a mountain shower and thunderstorm (someone called it our baptism on the mountain!). The day flew by and time and hunger and thirst had no meaning on that mountain. Lives were changed, commitments made, diseases healed, and friendships made.

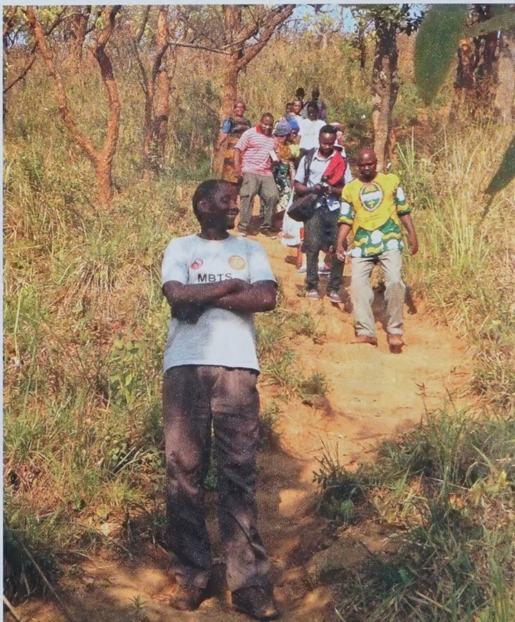
Coming down the mountain was a completely different experience as people, who now had names, accompanied us. Lloyd was there and Festus, Joyce often arm-in-arm with Jeanne, and 40 or more folk with whom we now had this experience in common. The bond would last long after this day.

Then we were back in the transport truck, driving on the windy roads back to Zolozolo Church. There were farewells and promises to see us at the early service tomorrow morning, when Jeanne would be preaching.

Our visit to Malawi was just beginning and the pastor, the Rev. Mwawi Chilongosi, met us at the manse where the fast ended and the days experiences were shared. Evening prayers were offered and finally beds were slept in. Mugone makola (Sleep Well).

(But sleep is short and morning devotions were well under way by 4:30 a.m..)

Kenn Stright is a retired Presbyterian Minister, and past KAIROS Atlantic Regional Representative. Kenn is on the planning team for Streams of Justice: Atlantic Gathering 2019.



E.H. Johnson Award

This 2019 E.H. Johnson Cutting Edge of Mission Award Recipient is Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Environmental, Cultural, and Human Rights Advocate.

Watt-Cloutier has been an internationally-recognized environmental, cultural, and human rights advocate for almost 25 years. Drawing attention to the impacts of climate change that people in the Arctic have been experiencing first-hand, she has identified Inuit people as "sentinels" to the rest of the world on this issue.

Born and raised traditionally in an Inuit community in Nunavik, Quebec, at age ten Watt-Cloutier was sent to schools in southern Canada and Churchill, Manitoba; later she studied counselling, education, and human development through McGill University. Watt-Cloutier was President of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) Canada for two terms (1995 to 2001) and in 2002 she was elected the ICC's International Chair. Representing the 155,000 Inuit of Canada, Greenland, Alaska and Russia, she was instrumental in the global negotiations leading to the 2001 Stockholm Convention that banned the generation and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) contaminating the Arctic food web. In 2005, she filed a legal petition through the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, alleging the violation of Inuit human rights by practices contributing to climate change. This was the first international human rights legal action ever advanced on the basis of climate change.

A 2007 Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Watt-Cloutier is the recipient of many awards. She is an Officer of the Order of Canada and has received 20 honorary doctorates. She is the author of the book The Right to Be Cold: One Woman's Story of Protecting Her Culture, the Arctic, and the Whole Planet. In 2017, the book was shortlisted for CBC Canada Reads and the Kobo Emerging Writer prize. Watt-Cloutier is a Commissioner on Aspen Institute's Commission on Arctic Climate Change, and she teaches courses on the Human Dimension of Climate Change at Bowden College, Maine, and Mount Allison University, New Brunswick.

Watt-Cloutier was witnessing the impacts of climate change on human life, culture, economy, and the environment in Arctic communities long before the rest of the world began debating them. She has made connections with actions—and inactions—in other parts of the world and identified how climate change threatens Inuit human rights.

Her unique life experiences have given her a prophetic perspective and opportunities to offer global leadership. Communicating clearly, passionately and with hope, she persistently challenges the rest of the world to see beyond boundaries of nations and cultures and disciplines, and to make decisions in the best interests of all creation.

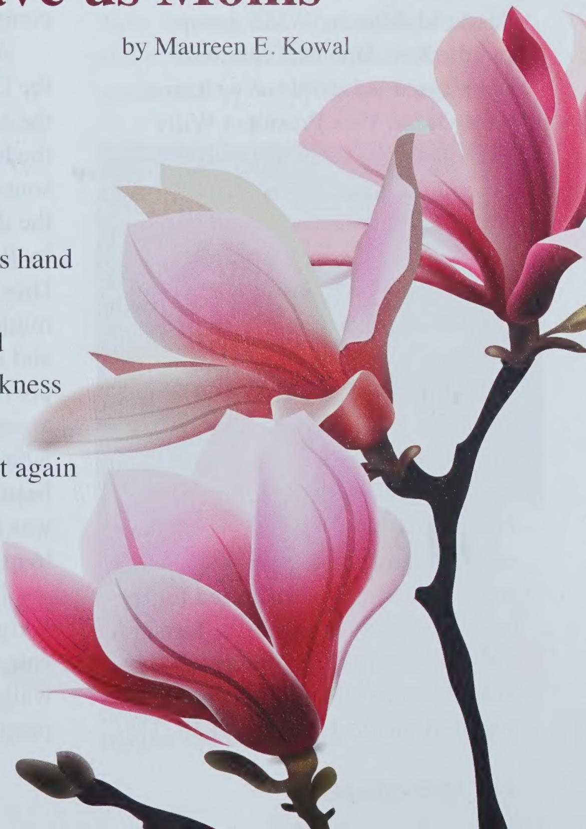
As Sheila says,"*I remind the world that the Arctic is not a barren land devoid of life but a rich and majestic land that has supported our resilient culture for millennia. Even though we are small in number and living far from the corridors of power, it appears that the wisdom of the land strikes a universal chord on a planet where many are searching for sustainability.*"

From https://presbyterian.ca/the-cutting-edge-of-mission/

Why God Gave us Moms

by Maureen E. Kowal

Mom to wipe our tears
To calm our fears
To make us smile
To sit with us awhile
Flowers picked by a child's hand
Dandelions and daisies
Mom thinks they are grand
Sleepless nights where darkness
wants to win
Mom comes in and its light again
A hand to hold
A telephone call
Advice on the phone
There when I call
So God gave us Moms
The best of all



In the Society

Presbyterial

February 19 was a welcome day of sunshine in the midst of an extended period of blustery weather when 30 women of the **Huron-Perth** Presbyterial met for their Annual Meeting at Knox Presbyterian Church, Listowel. The theme for the day was *Each Day…A New Beginning*.

Presbyterial President Ruth Hart of Knox North Easthope opened the morning in prayer and we sang the hymn, God who set us on a journey. Helen Bender from the Listowel Bessie McMurchy WMS group and the Rev. Don McCallum of Knox extended words of welcome. Presbyterial Vice President Willy Drost from St. Mary's provided a meditation, focusing on the how great things can be achieved when we dream, especially when our dreams are of making a better world. The WMS Purpose was then recited in unison.

Members of St. Andrews, Stratford, led a very moving In Memoriam service. It honoured eleven WMS members from the Presbyterial who had completed their earthly journeys in the past year. A special offering was collected for the benefit of Spencer Edwards, former Youth Consultant for the Synod of Southwestern Ontario, who suffered a serious medical crisis in 2017. This was followed by business matters, including the reading of annual reports and the installation of officers for 2019.

The morning speaker was Linda Matthews, Co-ordinator of the Messy Church program at Avonton Presbyterian Church. Messy Church was begun in England in 2004 as a means of reaching out to families who are not part of traditional churches. Linda described the types of activities involved and discussed the impact of the program on the church and the community in Avonton.

A delicious lunch was served by the Listowel Church women; then the afternoon program began with the hymn, Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet. St. Marys WMS led the devotions that had been prepared by Rebecca Sherbino of Paris.Willy Drost described the Raw Carrot ministry program at Paris Presbyterian and its impact, then Bessie Hounsell provided a meditation on how accepting rather than judging those who threaten our comfort can have beautiful and unexpected results. This was followed by the singing of the hymn, Lord in this broken world.

The afternoon speaker, Leslie Wright of Stratford, provided an entertaining and inspiring talk on walking the labyrinth as a spiritual practice. Labyrinths are a form of walking meditation and paths to prayer. Linda noted that, unlike mazes which are designed to confuse us, labyrinths are designed to help us find our way. She talked about the history of labyrinths, and the different types, and ways in which they have been used. She also invited us to visit the labyrinth which she has installed in her own backyard!

Following the Roll Call, the offering was collected and dedicated, and courtesies were extended to all those who helped to make the day a success.

The meeting closed with the singing of the hymn, Now greet the swiftly changing year, and a prayer led by Willy Drost from St. Mary's.

Blessed with safe driving weather, **Paris** Presbyterial held their annual meeting on February 9 at Knox Presbyterian Church in Woodstock. Valentine's Day inspired our theme of "Ripples of Love" and the love did ripple out among our 34 participants from the beginning to the end.

A Silent Auction of Valentine Boxed Treats enlivened the half- hour registration time as participants bid on their favourite box. Also available was a used book table. Presbyterial president, Judy MacIntosh, welcomed everyone and we began our morning of interesting speakers. Margaret Douglas, of Woodstock, spoke about her October mission trip to Malawi with a mission team sponsored by the New St. James Presbyterian Church in London. Laura Fulton, from Simcoe, talked about her experiences as part of a Malawi tour with the Moderator of the 144th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Their presentations complimented each other and gave us a good idea of the challenges of life in Malawi today.

Three candles were lit during the Memorial Service in memory of WMS members who sent out their ripples of love over many years. Two of these women had celebrated their 100th birthdays. Would that all of us could be faithful members that long!

During the noon hour break, there was one last opportunity to bid at the Silent Auction. Thanks to the generosity of our WMS members

Organizers Deb Melnyk, Simcoe and Marybel Brennan, Embro

Presbyterial members registering their bids.

Margaret Douglas shared her Malawi tour with St James' team.

who supported the Silent Auction, the used book table, and the offering, our Presbyterial is now able to financially aid Kenora, Haiti, and the Spencer Edward projects.

The afternoon dealt with our annual reports submitted by the four auxiliaries in Paris Presbyterial and we adjourned vowing to continue sending ripples of love into our community and beyond.

London Presbyterial 105th Annual Meeting was held on January 17 at New St. James Presbyterian Church in London with the theme, Let Your Light Shine.

After the registration, refreshments, and gathering music, Valerie Shaw, President, constituted the meeting. The Minutes and the Treasurer's Report were adopted and read. Reports were also presented from the Adult Secretary, Glad Tidings, Historian and Friendship Convenor. Winn Files reported from the Nominating Committee and the Rev. Dr. David Thompson installed the new officers.

Then, the Rev. Theresa McDonald gave the report of Camp Kintail and led the Bible study.

After lunch, Valerie Shaw led

the In Memorium and four members were remembered: Lois Carroll, Sarah McAlpine, Anne Hardy, and Margaret Blackwell.

Karon Baron and Cathy Reid then presented on their Tumekutana trip to South Africa. The meeting closed with singing, This little light of mine and all repeating the Mizpah benediction.

Members of the **Waterloo-Wellington** Presbyterial met on March 18 at Westminster-St. Paul's church in Guelph for their Annual Meeting.

President Dr. Wilma Welsh opened the meeting with prayer, welcomed everyone, and thanked our guests, the Rev. Sarah Kim, WMS Executive Director; Janet Brewer, WMS National President; and Mary Veale-Parker, CNOB President, for attending.

Secretary Gladys Robson welcomed everyone and described the interesting history of the Westminster-St Paul's congregation.

Trudi Smit of Guelph led the devotions, and Margaret Lewis led a Memorial Service for the 16 members who passed away during 2018.

The President reported the sad news that three WMS groups have closed as of the end of 2018: Mount Forest, Puslinch, and Eden Mills.

Rev. Sarah Kim and Janet Brewer outlined the situation across Canada and explained how adjustments are being made to simplify our meetings and activities in the face of declining membership and resources.

Dr. Tori Smit then helped us analyse our present situation and future needs of the Presbyterial in small focus groups; and she stated that she would continue to work closely with our new President, Jean Godin, and the executive in planning our work for the future.

Dr. Welsh closed the meeting with a benediction.

Lanark-Renfrew Presbyterial held their Annual Meeting in Westminster Church, Smiths Falls, on February 2 with the theme, How Bright is Your Light?

Renfrew led devotions based on Matthew 5:16, which states 'Let your light shine so that men may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.' Each Renfrew WMS lady read about a certain type of lamp (smoky, dim, flickering, bright) and asked which type were we? We then sang, This little light of mine.

Kathi DesChene, Rhoda Anderson, and Vivian Young read, The Seasons of Prayer, followed by the hymn, O for a world where everyone. Betty Fraser-Smith led the In Memoriam service. Each rainbow reminds us of God's promise of eternal life, and we remembered: Jean Dewar, Joan McDiarmid, Cassie McGregor, Peggy Putnam, Margaret Reynolds, and Henny Donkersteeg.

Rev Sarah Kim, WMS Executive Director, and Janet Brewer, National

WMS President, attended. They led a discussion and noted that many WMS groups and presbyterials are struggling. Suggestions were shared, such as: Think short term, perhaps one year or one activity at a time. Business can be done by email, computer, and phone. Enough content must be in each activity so that people will wish to attend.

Janet Brewer conducted the installation of the executive for 2019.

Patricia Grainger, our guest speaker and past president of the Synodical of Quebec and Eastern Ontario, spoke about her trip to Malawi in April 2018. The theme of her presentation was Giving Light Through Mission. Bright lights provided by The Presbyterian Church in Canada are the prison ministries (PCC provided soap, bed mats, clothing and bibles); Maternal and Child Health (training for new mothers, AIDS and rural outreach clinics); and Agriculture (financing for self-help groups, solar power, and food security programs). In closing, Pat stated that we can keep our light bright by continuing our support for International Ministries and PWS&D through our financial giving and prayer.

Joan Hilliard extended courtesies and Mary-Lynn McConnachie gave the closing prayer and benediction.

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Remembering

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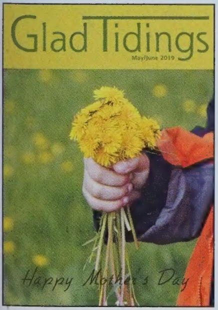
Minnie Boyes
St. David's Church,
Vankoughnet WMS
Vankoughnet ON

CORRECTION: Kathy Tutty is alive and well! Her name mistakenly appeared in the March April 2019 Remembering section. Our apologies for this error.

Pass Me Along



One of the best ways to promote the *Glad Tidings*, is to pass your magazine along to others. Pass along these articles:

- Western Gathering (p. 4) to all the women of your church. Encourage them to sign up for the 2020 National Women's Gathering.
- It's Not Fair (p. 28) to the chair of your Mission Committee.
- University Ministry (p. 12) to a young adult in your congregation.

If you need an additional copy of the magazine to pass along, email Gladtidings@presbyterian.ca.

National Presbyterian Women's Gathering

Through the Waters

DATE: May 15–18, 2020

PLACE: Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Richmond Hill, Ontario

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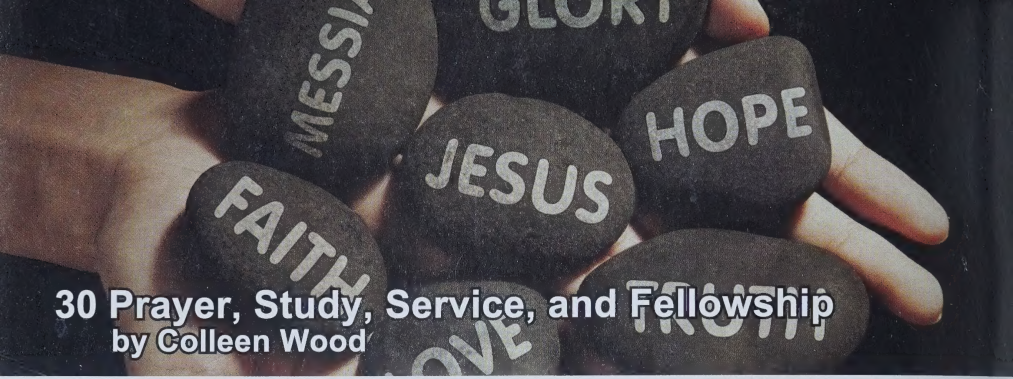
Glad Tidings

July/August 2019



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by Colleen Wood

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Glad Tidings

July/August 2019
Volume 95, No. 4
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Funded by the Government of Canada | Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2019 subscription rate $20.00 plus applicable taxes: $21 for AB, BC, SK; $22.60 for ON, MB; $23 for QC, NB, NF, NS, PEI. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada for our publishing activities.

Editorial

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Number 6:24–26 (NRSV)

How many times have I sung these words? I know it's been more than 1000 times. My guess is more than 5000 times. It is the nightly blessing I began singing to my infant son and now continue to occasionally sing to my young teen boy. I also sing it to my daughter at night, though she often requests a few other songs as well. It was also sung to both of my children by the congregation of St. Andrew's Brampton at their baptism.

The Aaronic blessing has such great depth. It is named such because it is the blessing that Aaron and his sons were to speak over Israel. It is amazing to think that in 14th century BCE, Aaron blessed the Israelites with these words. For the Israelites, God's presence was essential as they were surrounded by enemies.

Today, my children may not be surrounded by the imminent threat of war, but they do have their daily challenges. They still need God in their life. They still need God's blessings. They especially need God's direction and God's peace. I love giving them this daily reminder that God is present in their lives. Every night, I ask God to continue to watch over my children and to wrap them in his care and love. I expect I will continue this after they have long left our home.

Just as my children need to hear these words of blessing, so do I. I need to constantly be reminded of God's peace, presence, forgiveness, insight, and protection. So often, I take this for granted and at other times I don't accept this blessing in its fullness. God blesses me with peace. I know this and have experienced this, yet so often, I have trouble trusting in this promise.

For you, the challenge might be different. With summer upon us, I challenge you to receive this blessing from Numbers 6. Accept it. Live it. Know God's peace in your life.

The HEAVENS are TELLING

The Heavens are telling the Glory of God. (Psalm 18:1)

by John Crowdis

A favourite activity for summer nights is stargazing. Whether one is out camping, or just getting away from the glare of the city lights, the starry night sky is a powerful reminder of the vastness and wonders of the universe. I personally find something deeply prayerful in taking in the night sky. Every point that we see is a sun in its own right, each lighting up in the darkness of space, creating a shining river through the cosmos. As humans, we have grouped the stars together into constellations, given the brighter ones names, and have told stories about them all.

Two years ago, on a warm summer night while visiting my in-laws in Parksville, BC, I pointed our camera skyward on a special mount that tracks the sky. I framed two stars that I could see in the constellation of Cygnus the Swan, which is visible throughout the summer months. Its brightest star, Deneb, is some 2600 light-years distant, and it forms the head of the cross in the constellation's main shape, and made for an easy target that I could focus on, along with Sadr, the central star in the cross.

With my own eyes, I only saw two brighter stars against a dark blue-to-black background, with the subtle hints of a shimmering cloud. It's beautiful in its own right, and it's a constellation that even people who aren't stargazers can easily find. Look up in the summer sky at night, and look for the cross; that's Cygnus. Look for the top of the cross, the center star, and that was my frame. Chances are that may be all you can see. These stars are bright enough to see even from the city lights, but there is so much more.

From where I set up the camera, I could make out these two stars, as well as the faint ethereal glow of the Milky Way around it. It was better than under the lights of the city. Taking pictures of the night sky isn't as simple as pointing the camera at the sky and clicking the button. It's tricky, it requires some specialized equipment, timers, trackers, several hours to take 24 five-minute-long exposures, and then a computer to process it all and bring out the image. It was a lot of work but the payoff was worth it, as you can see the result from my picture that I took that night!

The picture I took framed these two bright stars upon a canvas of thousands upon thousands of stars, and giant clouds of red and black. Look carefully, and you can see shapes, including the "North American Nebula" in the lower left corner. Just out of the frame to the right is the location of Cygnus X-1, the first confirmed Black Hole that astronomers discovered. Several of the red clouds in the frame are stellar nurseries where new stars are being born. All of this in a small slice of the night sky where we might otherwise dismiss it as a couple of stars twinkling away.

Pictures like this remind us that there is far more to God's universe than we can see. When the Psalmist first sang "The heavens are telling the glory of God," they may not have known how profoundly true that really is. In this slice of sky, we see creation itself in motion, only seeming to be frozen and timeless because our lives are fleeting moments of time relative to the universe around us. New stars, new systems, and even new life is hard-wired into the fabric of creation... and the evidence for it is right over our heads, just beyond what we can see.

For me, stargazing and astronomy are spiritual, prayerful exercises. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy the science of it, and learning as much about it as I can, but ultimately it is about immersing myself in awe of the universe around us. This can be as simple as lying on my back on the cool grass, gazing up at the summer sky, or even in front of a computer, trying to tease out an image left by photons that have travelled unimaginable distances to leave their trace on a camera sensor.

There is so much that we miss in the world and universe around us, and every once in a while we need to stop and to pay attention, and open ourselves to the wonders of God's universe.

Believe in the Light

by Janet Cassels Ham

Believe in the light...and you will become children of the light.
John 12:36 (NIV)

The benediction was one of my favourite parts of the church service as a child. Our Irish minister would boom out these words, slowly and purposely, giving us time to absorb the meaning of each line.

“The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine
upon you, and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up His countenance
upon you, and give you peace.”
Numbers 6:24–26

I believed his words. I imagined the blessing flowing down from heaven; God’s face shining on me; God’s peace and love surrounding me. What a wonderful beginning for any child to have, knowing and believing that God sees them and wants to shine love and favour on them. When childhood challenges came, this foundation helped withstand the storms.

As a teen we sang, Make Me a Channel of Your Peace. I realized the blessings and love I received from God were not just for me to enjoy, but were to be shared. I was to allow God to flow through my being toward others. I was to let God shine through my words and actions. Our church and youth organizations helped me recognize my God-given gifts and provided opportunities for me to step out and put these into practice. I was assured that God would provide me with the wisdom and strength to do what I was called to do. How amazing that we, like mere earthen vessels, can have the light of God working within us and through us.

Now retirement has opened another perspective for me. My usual light-shining deeds have been severely challenged. No longer is my energy limitless. As I travel outside my home country, I have trouble communicating in another language. I am no longer in one place but move amongst a number of communities. So how then do I let God shine in me now, when I am no longer doing what I used to do and love? I have had to be reminded by my husband that God is still using us. Perhaps not in the ways we were used in the past, or how we may desire, but in different ways.

When I questioned God, I was reminded of Moses' life. He was 80-years-old when he began a new 40-year mission. He too was travelling through a foreign land, and he too had times of discouragement and questioning his purpose in the midst of his mission. Fear-filled people surrounded him. They were in the desert both physically and mentally. They were surrounded by blessings yet often too discouraged to truly appreciate God's presence with them.

What helped Moses shine? His time spent in the presence of God resulted in God's light shining through his face. Although he initially did not recognize it, those around him noticed. (Exodus 34:29) Yet the longer Moses was apart from God, the light in his face faded. I believe that time spent in the presence of God will have a similar effect on us. God's Holy Spirit will fill us and shine through us, even though we too may be unaware. So as I fuss and wonder, how do I shine for God now, I hear a small voice telling me, "first things first."

"First, spend time with me. Just as Moses had the privilege to come into my presence, you too have a way open to you. By Christ's sacrifice, you are invited to come into my throne room, to enter my presence with boldness and confidence."

"Second, seek my voice. Listen for my words." Jeremiah 33:3 "Call to me and I will answer and tell you great and hidden things you do not know."

"Finally, trust in me. Step by step, let me direct your path. Let me shine in you and for you. Let me do the work. I will be the light that will light your way through the darkness and through the unknown."

As I think back through my life, I recognize how God has directed my path. Often, God's lamp or light only lit up the few steps ahead. I needed to step out in faith, each step like a stepping-stone. Following a path, not knowing where the path would lead. Looking back, I recognize that when I allowed fear and worry to overwhelm

> “So how will I continue to shine for God? I am open to begin afresh. God used Moses despite being mature in years. I am also willing to see God at work in the simple things of life.”

me, I squelched God’s light. When I focused on gratitude along the path, my journey was more joy filled, despite the circumstances. Through it all, I can attest that God has remained faithful and has always been with me.

So how will I continue to shine for God? I am open to begin afresh. God used Moses despite being mature in years. I am also willing to see God at work in the simple things of life. My main focus is to cultivate time spent in the throne room of God, enjoying God’s presence, listening for insight and wisdom, and nurturing an attitude of gratitude. I will aim to live life by taking each step along the path shown to me.

After our worship service on Sunday, the man seated in front of us, turned to us, face beaming. He thanked us for surrounding him with praise. He explained that in the past he loved to sing but now was unable. Our praise and worship filled him with gratitude and joy. The light in his face ignited hope within me. Yes, God will use the little things in life to let his light shine in us.

Believe in the light…and you will become children of light. John 12:36 (NIV)

As a child of God’s light, God will make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. That light will shine through you and be a source of light in our world.

Janet Cassels Ham is a retired Family Support Counselor and Diaconal Minister. She and Brian, her husband, spend their time between Canada and Costa Rica. In Manuel Antonio, they attend an International Church that worships on the beach. It is a church without walls and has the largest sanctuary in the world. A flag welcomes all to join. People stop, take pictures, and some choose to join in. Others set up chairs within earshot, moving closer each week. The church is growing and becoming a light in the community.

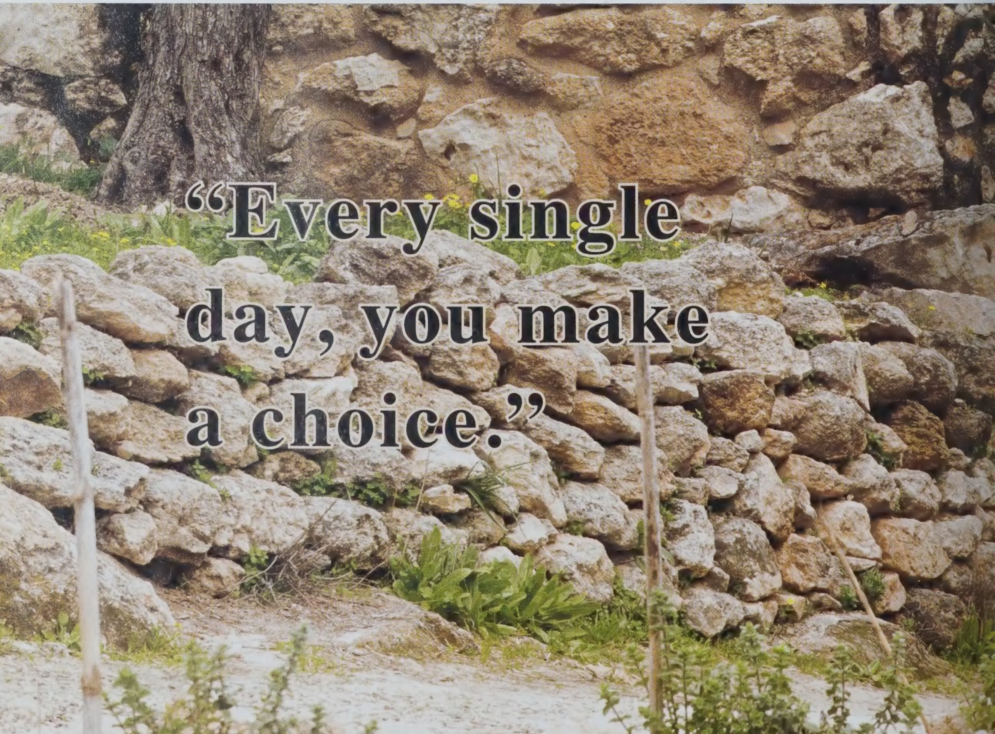
See the Light, Be the Light

by Wilma Boyce

One of my grandsons at Easter weekend noticed a picture I had on my fridge. It is a picture of the interior of a bus with two people sitting on either side. One is in the sunshine and smiling, looking excited about the day ahead while the other is shadowed by a wall of rocks, looking very sad and scared of the day that looms ahead. The caption on the picture reads, "Every single day you make a choice."

My grandson asked me what the picture said. I explained it to him, and asked him, "Which one do you want to be?" He pointed to the smiling man and said, "This one." I said, "Me too." Sometimes it is not easy to see the light, or be the light, even on the sunniest days.

I am reminded of another road trip described in Luke 24: 13–35, only the travelers were walking, not riding a bus. And though I imagine the sun was out, on one side were two disciples, very sad and scared of the future and on the other side the "light of the world." Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their



"Every single day, you make a choice."

eyes were kept from recognizing him.

These two men, Cleopas and his friend, walking the road to Emmaus show us how we often respond when things go wrong. These are not just any two Jewish men who happened to witness the horrible events of the crucifixion. These are two men who were followers of Jesus, two men that Jesus knows and cares about…cares enough to spend the time it takes to walk seven miles so he can remind them of who he is, and who they are, and inspire them to choose to turn around, to go back to their community of faith.

Jesus understands their grief—they hoped and trusted—and Jesus is with them, but he's also trying to pull them out of this grief and sympathy.

"What were you taught? Let's look at this from a bigger perspective—how does it affect everyone, and who's really in charge? Let me tell you what I do know," says Jesus. "God is doing a new thing." Then Jesus teaches them their story as God's people.

Jesus walks the whole seven miles with them, explaining that what God promised had happened, and just in time. "At the end of the road" when it looks as if he will keep walking, the two disciples invite Jesus in, "Stay with us, it's too late to travel on."

This is what Jesus was waiting for...now he gives them a visual memory that will open their eyes and

their hearts. He breaks bread with them—he took the bread and blessed it and broke it—it was just like that when Jesus fed the 5000. This is Jesus! Then he's gone.

"How could we have missed it, but didn't we really know as he talked to us," they say to each other and they head right back to Jerusalem, to their community of faith to tell their story and say, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. We believe you!"

What a great ending for those disciples. They had almost left their faith behind, but Jesus went after them like lost sheep and called them back.

Sometimes we too get stuck in a place where we can't see the light to find our way out, and sometimes we are stuck and we don't even know it. Trauma and tragedy can have that effect, and when it is close to home, we might react instinctively, in a way we have learned from previous experience because we can't quite figure out how things could have gone the way they did.

Sometime we walk away and get out of town because staying is more than we could possibly handle. We may not recognize people; there may be great gaps in our memories; deep sorrow and loss of hope may keep our eyes from recognizing someone who comes alongside to help us, and from sensing or recognizing when Jesus is right there with us.

What is the road to Emmaus for us? What tragedy breaks our heart, what thing distorts, distracts or disrupts all that seems right? We head down the road trying to make sense out of it all, or perhaps to get away from what is bothering us. The road to Emmaus leads to a place where we may have our eyes opened.

Working in the field of pastoral care, I have observed that some of the changes churches experience can cause some people to identify with this kind of sadness as they watch membership decline in many of the long-standing groups that supported the mission and ministries of the church. The senior population in particular may experience a sense of loss because they hoped and trusted in a future where younger people would take over what they started and developed, but social and cultural changes in today's world are too great to guarantee any such thing. They grieve the loss of their groups, and I grieve the loss of pastoral care that was an important part of those groups.

But the road trip to Emmaus reminds us that God is doing a new thing and it reminds us of the faithfulness of Jesus.

Each day we choose.

We, like the disciples, need someone to help us along such a road.

We need to be reminded Jesus is right beside us but we may not recognize him, because there are things that keep us from seeing him.

Here at the end of the road, we need to decide. Are we going to invite Jesus in to break bread with us or will we let him keep walking, and when we see the light, can we be the light?

We may be the ones who are to walk with someone who has trouble seeing the Lord. We might be called to walk the whole seven miles to the end if need be, to call them back to the community they belonged by being compassionate and truthful, and telling them what God has done and is doing for the restoration of the whole of creation to relationship with Him.

Since the changes made in our church programs we are learning how to provide pastoral care and build community in new ways. God is doing a new thing. In September 2018, we opened the Café and it has taken off in a wonderful way. It is in response to the sadness caused by the ending of the many long-standing programs of the now elderly. Many served faithfully until time no longer allowed. Others could not take over, again because of life circumstances in a changing culture. It was a necessity to learn new ways of covering the most important aspects in the church community. A friendship circle was formed for women; funeral receptions were taken on by an amazing new team; and the Café meets the needs of a significant number of people pastorally and socially, as well as being an ideal stepping stone for outreach.

Joyful volunteers are the heart of it all. Sonia and Karen were the first to jump in with managing funeral receptions. Janis, Lily, Dave, Ron, Judy, and Brock have been my cheerful operation managers at the Café. Only one or two came the first week, but we hung on to the commitment to keep it going and now we average 20 to 25 people attending each week. Now, whoever comes takes part in welcoming others. There is no need to do anything, be anything, or bring anything. "Welcome to the Café." We offer tea and coffee and delicious baking for whatever you would like to give." God is doing a new thing. The light is reaching out and we are building community.

Every single day, you make a choice.

If we're brave enough to invite God in, kind enough to share a meal, ready to let go of whatever keeps us from living fully, we suddenly recognize a familiar action—the breaking of the bread— which reminds us that Jesus is our security, Jesus feeds us, gives us hope, leads us to the light, and saves us.

Wilma Boyce is the Pastoral Care & Adult Ministry Volunteer Coordinator at Oakridge Presbyterian Church in London, ON. Her passion is to be engaged in the building and nurturing of relationships with the Lord and with people.

Birthday Blessings

by Patricia Schneider

Last Sunday, our church was filled to overflowing. Wish I could say that was normal, but in today's world we recognize that church attendance is not always high on the priority list of many people. But last Sunday was a day to celebrate the first birthday of a child.

As many of our congregation are grandparents and great-grandparents, who often live kilometers away from our own families, we take so much joy in the sharing of birthdays and baptisms of these little ones.

So, added to the joy of Spring's arrival was the arrival of this little one last year. Today, he certainly had his moment of glory. The basement area was decorated, delicious food was prepared, and there was laughter and joy filling every corner.

But this new little lad had a different heritage than many of his other small friends for his parents came from Cameroon. His little sister had already won our hearts a few years earlier so when he arrived he just doubled our joy.

And the church was filled with so many others from Nigeria, Uganda, South Sudan, and Rwanda. They were visiting us, to help celebrate this special birthday. It almost felt like I was visiting another country. The smiles that were shared were as bright as the different clothing representing the various backgrounds. These were all friends from different churches ... Catholic, Baptist, and Anglican.

His Dad and Mom had been part of our congregation for some time and I felt blessed in being their Elder and sharing in Sunday hugs.

I know a little of what it is like to live in a different country as many years ago I spent three years in Germany with my military husband. He had learned a bit of German from his grandmother, but my German was non-existent. I did have a three-month-old baby and that opened all kinds of doors. I think people all over the world are enamored with little ones. They are our hope for tomorrow and God's greatest gift.

They also have a great ability to recall their early experiences. That baby is now grown up and has asked me about things in Germany. She asked if I remembered saying, "No she can't eat that chocolate, she has no teeth," and someone insisting, "Yes, she will just suck on it and enjoy it." Her memory of this shook me up as the whole conversation was in German and she was only ten months old. We learn our language skills and absorb our memories of events at such an early age.

I hope this birthday boy will remember this special celebration ... or at least parts of it. The rest of us certainly will remember the laughter, the festival feeling, the beautiful clothes of the participants, and the joy we had in celebrating one whole year of watching this little boy grow before our eyes.

In a world where hope is often lost, God has given us these little ones, named them, called them His own, and given us the gift of helping mould them into the people that He would have them be. They are an enormous responsibility but oh the joy, the amazing joy of sharing our lives with these special little people. Thank you, Lord.

CHAMPION OF FAITH

by Connie Hale-Duncan

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.

Revelation 21:4 NRSV

Today, I was going to help my friend Felicia pack. I picked up a cardboard box—just an ordinary cardboard box; yet, it was to hold some precious memories of well-lived days. I was helping Felicia pack her things away: books, notes, ornaments, photo albums filled with pictures that captured years of living and loving, and cards with hand-written, heart-felt messages—all placed in a box of time—for another generation to open one day and find the treasures of Felicia.

Felicia was not moving or going on a vacation. She was preparing a room for herself on the main floor of her home, where she would live out her last days on earth. This room would make it easier for her to move around in her wheelchair without the overwhelming struggle of trying to move up and down stairs.

Felicia had Lou Gehrig's disease, known as ALS. Her body became lifeless, as one muscle at a time died. Lou Gehrig's is a devastating neurodegenerative disease. Those living with the disease become progressively paralyzed, due to degeneration of the upper and lower motor neurons in the brain and spinal cord. People die from ALS because they can no longer breathe or swallow.

Felicia was a wonderful, godly woman. She was a woman of great courage and creativity. She loved flowers, planting a garden, and just enjoying the outdoors. She would take her flowers and so carefully press them between cardboard to hold onto their beauty for years to come. Felicia was all about capturing beauty. She loved to travel and see the Creator's almighty hand at work in the mountains of Italy, and His strength in the palm trees of Arizona. Every meal was home cooked for her family. She loved her family and grandchildren, and spent countless hours playing with them.

At times, tears would flood Felicia's soul, testing her faith, as she, each day, courageously fought against Goliath. In this battle of life against death, this champion had to make heart-wrenching decisions—like whether she wanted an oxygen machine when she could no longer breathe on her own, or a feeding tube when she could no longer swallow. No one should have to make such decisions in life, but she bravely did. She had also made another decision: to believe in miracles. She said, "I put my trust in God, and I believe, one day, I will be healed and whole again. I do not worry about tomorrow, for I know God will take care of me."

As I continued to pack the boxes, my heart started to silently cry out: "I hate disease! I hate cancer, Lou Gehrig's, MS, and heart disease!" And I am not alone living with this hatred. I believe when Jesus stood at Lazarus' tomb and wept, he was not only weeping for his friend, but he had an intense feeling of anger; and anguish arose inside of him because of what the enemy had done to his perfect creation. His children were being tortured by the evil one, and Jesus stood there on that day, and in a loud voice, he cried, "Come out, Lazarus!" Lazarus came out of his tomb—his stone box—and lived! Can you imagine the kind of tears Jesus wept? How intense the emotion was in his voice, and how piercing his eyes were with deep compassion for his friend.

I believe Jesus still weeps. He is ever interceding before His Father for His children.

He wept for Felicia. He weeps for people who are pale and fragile, sitting in the cancer clinics with chemo being pumped through their veins as they sweat profusely. He is praying for the broken-hearted woman who no longer has a husband; for the mother who can no longer hold her child in her arms.

The greatest disease aside from loneliness is "heart failure," when we no longer believe God has a plan for our lives, and we quietly live a defeated life. Only God knows about our heart failure. Our hearts just stop beating with passion; we lose the ability to hope or dream because of the hurt and pain. We begin to pack our lives away in imaginary cardboard boxes.

When the boxes were all packed, I began spending every Wednesday afternoon visiting with Felicia. I would look into her face of courage. She didn't know how much she ministered to me. I was a widow with a broken heart and she was a woman with a broken body. Together, we sat and prayed, believing God would take care of us. We laughed and reminisced over days gone by. She became my sister in Christ. When exactly did the bonding of our hearts happen? I do not know—but I am grateful that God gave me this precious time with Felicia.

As champions of faith, we grieve our losses, but not without hope. One day, there will be no more packing away of precious things—no more stuffing pain down deep into the crevasses of our hearts. There will be no more widows, disease, or heartache. Our lives will be open for a Saviour to place His hand upon us and make us completely free, no longer confined to boxes of any kind!

Connie Hale-Duncan is an elder and leads a ministry for women at Lakeshore-St. Andrew's Church in Windsor ON. She is the author of two books and writes and speaks about hope.

Memorial

Gerardina "Dineke" Adriana Kraay-Hofman passed away at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon on April 27, 2019, with her husband by her side.

While teaching elementary school in Wageningen in the Netherlands, Dineke met the love of her life. She married Gerrit "Gerry" Kraay on May 8, 1963. They had three sons before they moved to Guelph ON in 1967. In 1974, they moved to Kemptville ON, where their fourth son was born. Since 1987 they have been living in Saskatoon.

Dineke was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother, who devoted her life to her family, her church, and her community. She loved tending her flower garden.

When her youngest son was in high school, Dineke fulfilled her dream of a university education. She enrolled as a mature, part-time student in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. She obtained her BA degree in 1996 and her MA degree in 2002. She then taught for two semesters at St. Thomas More College at the University of Saskatoon.

Dineke was active at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. She served as church school teacher and as elder. Her great interest was in missions. She was very active in the Women's Missionary Society, both locally and on the national level. She participated in mission awareness trips to Japan, Taiwan, India, Central Europe, Israel/Palestine, and Malawi. Those of you who met, Dineke will remember her caring voice for the marginalized, her strong intellect, and her love of The Bookroom. She also represented the WMS on the board of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada.

Dineke is survived by her husband Gerry, sons Hendrik (Judith Clark) of Calgary; Feite (Norma, nee Vazquez) and children Alex and Isabella, all of Toronto; Aart (Vickie, nee Majerovich) and children Constance, Tomas and Nicolas all of Alexandria, VA; and Klaas (Mary Beth, nee Halferty) and children Emma and Jacob, all of Toronto. She is also survived by her brother Auke Hofman, sisters Jantien Heming, Thilly Kuiper, Liesbet Lukens and sister-in-law Ans Hofman, as well as numerous nieces and nephews in the Netherlands.

A Prayer for our Camps

Please take a moment this summer to pray for the important ministry of our camps and retreat centres across the country.

We give you thanks, God of grace, for this amazing world in which we live.
We stand in awe before your majesty and the beauty of the earth.
We are grateful to those who went before us who set aside beautiful places for outdoor ministry.

We give you thanks, God of grace, for places of play and joy.
We all need the chance to laugh and to be renewed in Your Spirit.
Thank you for the places of holy play in our life.
Help us to glorify You and enjoy You forever in all that we do.
We give thanks for each and every camp and retreat centre across the country.

We pray for our campers.
We pray for dress-up meals, starry nights, flat water for paddling, and capture the flag.
May the stories of your love be heard and may they find a home deep in the hearts of the campers.
Help the campers know and experience the grace of Christian community, a place where they belong.
God of grace, hear our prayers.

We pray for the summer staff,
counsellors, lifeguards, and
programming staff.
Bless them with patience and love as
they learn to be a community.
Help them to show your love to each of
the campers in their care.
May they see each one as a child of God,
beloved by you.
Help them to teach your story of love and
grace.
God of grace, hear our prayers.

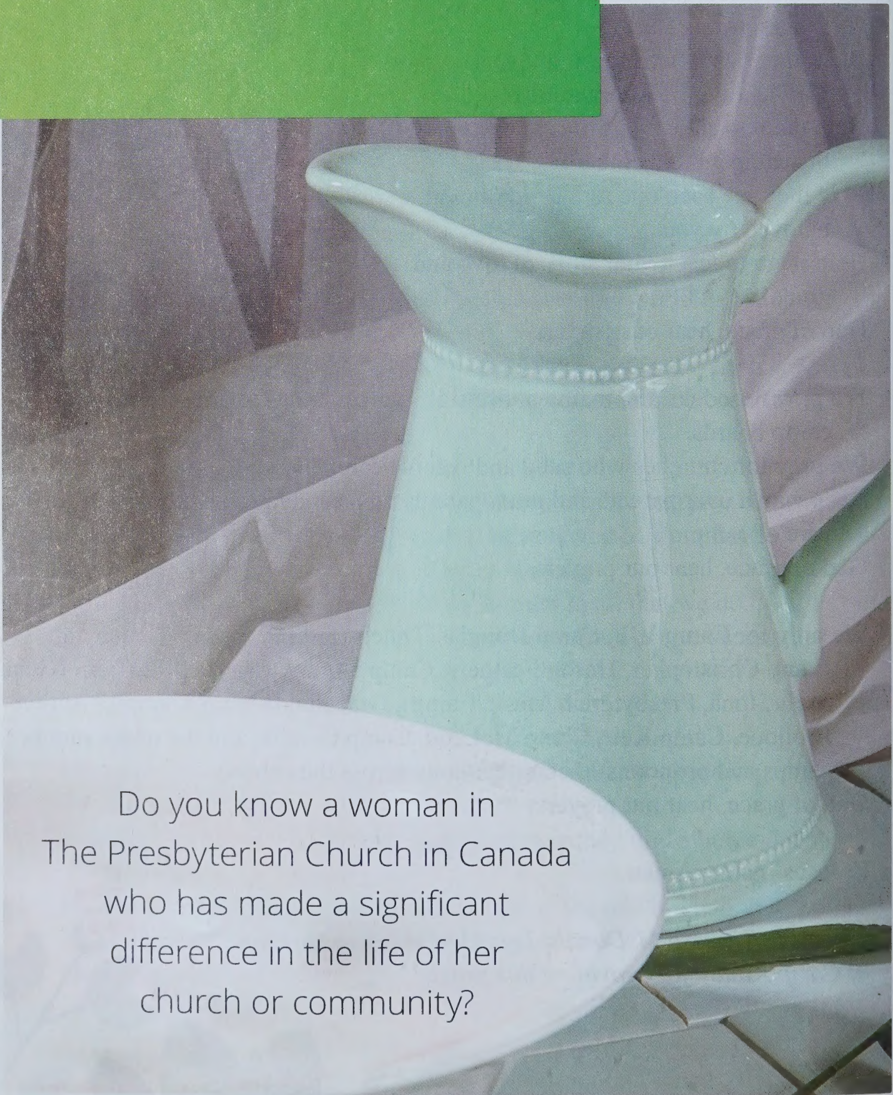
We pray for cooks and maintenance staff, nurses and chaplains, directors and
camp boards.
We pray for churches who send and receive campers.
Keep watch over parents and grandparents who send their precious ones to the
care of camp.
God of grace, hear our prayers.

We pray for Camp VIP, Camp Douglas, Dutch Harbour, Camp Kannawin,
Camp Christopher, Huron Feathers, Camp Kintail, Crieff Hills, Cairn (Glen
Mohr, Iona, Presbyterian Music Camp), Gracefield Camp, Camp D'Action
Biblique, Camp Keir, Camp McLeod, Camp Geddie, and the many summer
camps and programs of congregations across the country.
God of grace, hear our prayers.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Thanks to Theresa McDonald-Lee, Co-Executive Director of Camp Kintail for providing this prayer.

Nominate a **WOMAN OF FAITH**



Do you know a woman in
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
who has made a significant
difference in the life of her
church or community?

The Presbyterian Woman of Faith Awards will be presented at the National Women's Gathering, May 17, 2020. (The Women's Gathering will be held in Richmond Hill ON from May 15–18, 2020.)

Nine women of The Presbyterian Church in Canada received this award at previous Gatherings and have shared their stories of ministry. The award has been given to diligent workers in their own congregation, to women who engaged in a special project or unique ministry, and to women for a lifetime of achievement.

All of the recipients of the award were nominated by The Presbyterian Church in Canada—sessions, Presbyteries, the Women's Missionary Society and Atlantic Mission Society, or groups and organizations within the church. It's a difficult task for the WOFA committee to choose a limited number of recipients, but a joy and privilege to read all of the nominations.

Once again, we need nominations from the Presbyterian community in order to honour up to three women at the 2020 Gathering. The award is open to women who are part of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, including lay, elders, diaconal ministers, missionaries, and clergy. Who might you nominate? Consider nominating a younger woman! Decide which category best fits your nominee. The three categories are: Faithful Service, Specific Accomplishment, and Lifetime of Achievement.

Details regarding requirements for nomination, the nomination form, and other information is available on the website (presbyterian.ca/woman-of-faith-awards) or by email (wofa @presbyterian.ca). The committee will receive nominations until November 30, 2019.

2017 Award Recipients

If You Want to Change The World...Start With Her!

by Carol Hamilton

DONATED BY CHANGE
HER WORLD

Linda and I were just packing up, after having been invited by the Zonta Club of Stratford to be the keynote speakers at their annual breakfast event. From the corner of my eye I could see a woman dressed in business attire approach the stage. As I rolled up our banner, she shook my hand and stated, "That was an amazing presentation. How did you and Linda ever create such an innovative charity? You can tell that you are bringing such hope to girls and women in Northern Malawi!"

Linda Willis and I met when I accepted the call to a congregation in Chatham ON in 2002. Linda was the Clerk of Session and as I began my role as minister, Linda was a supportive guide and mentor as I navigated through those early days of ministry. As circumstances

"...the lack of hope or opportunity for the girls and women we met would not leave our minds."

would be, I ended up leaving that congregation after a brief stay and Linda and I simultaneously moved to the community of Stratford, ON. As we became familiar with our new community, we would often find ourselves in conversation about many topics, but it was social justice issues surrounding girls and women in the developing world which seemed to stir us the most.

In April 2006, Linda and I were given the unique opportunity of travelling to Malawi on a Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) study visit. Unlike most tours which were focused in the Blantyre area, we visited projects in Northern Malawi where we saw first-hand the way in which The Presbyterian Church in Canada was attempting to intervene in the HIV/AIDS crisis ravaging much of Africa. We visited hospitals, clinics, and travelled to remote villages to see plays performed by students and women's support groups to educate the people about how to prevent the spread of this disease. There was clear

Sellah and Esther when they first arrived at CHW

evidence of effective work being done to address this crisis. However, what impacted us was the overt poverty, gender inequality, and lack of hope in the faces of the girls and women that we met.

As Linda and I flew back to Canada, we knew that we needed to do something. We didn't know what or how, but the lack of hope or opportunity for the girls and women we met would not leave our minds. Over the next four years, we talked to CEOs of various charities and researched what strategies would be most effective in breaking the cycle of poverty in the developing world. Everything we read pointed to the education of girls as the most significant catalyst for change.

In 2010, we approached a legal firm to inquire if they would assist us in establishing a Canadian Registered charity—Change Her World—with the mandate of educating girls and women in the developing world beginning in Northern Malawi in the areas of Chilumba and Mzuzu/Ekwendeni. At first, we were told that we should give up on such an endeavour and become volunteers with one of the many successful organizations already established on the world stage. However, Linda and I had a clear vision of what this charity could do to impact the world and we submitted our 44-page proposal. A few days later, we received a call from one of their lead lawyers. "Your proposal is one of the best I have ever received, and we are happy to assist you in obtaining charity status," was her reply.

As we navigated through the many procedures required to establish a not-for-profit entity and then apply for charity status, work was already underway in Malawi. With the help of a Project Committee of 16 volunteers, Fiskani Chirwa, our Project Coordinator, set out to educate the chiefs and community leaders about the mandate of Change Her World. Soon the area was divided into seven zones with a ten-member Zone Committee established in each zone to assess the needs of the girls to be supported by Change Her World and implement other initiatives within the project mandate.

We had a plan to begin in Fall 2011 by assisting 70 girls with school fees and uniforms, but in April 2011 we received an urgent request from Fiskani. The Project Committee had become aware of two girls who were likely to lose their school year because their family members/guardians were unable to pay their third term school fees. The names of these girls were Esther and Sellah.

Esther as a teacher

“Could we begin now?” was the plea of our coordinator. Our answer was “yes.” This came just as we prepared to launch the charity at our first annual dinner the following week.

Northern Malawi is remote and set apart from the rest of the country by geography and language (Chitumbuka is the vernacular of the north). As Linda and I once again made the trek to Northern Malawi in 2011, we had no idea the journey we had begun. The needs were great and soon we realized that providing an education was more than just providing a school uniform and school supplies to primary students or school fees for secondary students. An appeal was received for underwear and reusable sanitary protection for the girls, and soon groups of women across Canada were sewing for us. By 2015, ten thousand pairs of underwear were shipped and distributed across our project area.

Cooking pots were purchased for all the primary schools. A medical scheme was established to ensure that if a girl became ill, a medical assessment and treatment could be provided so that she could return to school. Bicycles were purchased for girls who had to walk long distances and blankets, solar lamps, and mosquito nets were added to the provisions allotted for each girl. When the hunger season occurred, a 50-kilogram bag of corn was provided to each Change Her World beneficiary.

Each visit that Linda and I made to Malawi allowed us to meet with committee leaders and our Project Committee who shared with us the stories of those being impacted by Change Her World. Soon our students were writing their entrance exams for university and college and we began to receive admission letters for girls to pursue degree programs and college training.

Sellah was granted admission to the Bachelor of Science Degree in Midwifery and Nursing. She has recently completed that degree and is working full-time in a rural hospital in Northern Malawi. Esther is now a Primary Teacher having completed a two-year Primary Teaching Certificate. Hope, opportunity, possibility, and excitement are growing for all beneficiaries. Who would imagine that a trip to Malawi in 2006 would result in more than 180 girls being supported yearly, including 29 young women currently attending post-secondary education in their chosen field of study?

Stellah as a new graduate

Latrines have been built at schools in jeopardy of closing due to the lack of adequate sanitation. Four wells have been drilled in remote areas, and four more are scheduled to be dug in the coming months to provide clean water for everyone to access, thanks to a successful partnership with Hope for Haiti out of St. Marys, ON. Girls' hostels have been renovated and this year two school communities will have their own newly constructed girls' hostels, thanks to the work of Change Her World. Vulnerable women in the community have also been given blankets, solar lamps, clothing, food in the hunger season, and sleeping mats.

The ripple effect is significant! Churches of all denominations, including Presbyterian churches, WMS groups, and many individuals have come along with Linda and I on this journey and have been instrumental in donating significant funds for this work. They have also collected hundreds of cartons of school supplies, teaching resources, underwear, clothing, soft-covered novels and story books, as well as much needed dictionaries, which have been shipped by air cargo to our projects.

This next year—2020—will mark our 10th anniversary of this charity in Canada. What will the future hold for the girls supported by Change Her World? Perhaps it is best articulated by one of the beneficiaries of this charity who recently said, “You have taken me from nowhere to somewhere. Thank you Change Her World!”

Rev. Carol Hamilton is the part-time minister at Knox Presbyterian Church, Harrington. She is also a registered nurse psychotherapist in private practice in Stratford, ON. She and Linda Willis (a retired teacher with specialization in special education) co-founded Change Her World in 2010 as a Canadian Registered Charity with the mandate to empower girls and women through education in the developing world with their first projects established in Northern Malawi. To date over one million dollars have been donated and used to further the education of hundreds of girls in the Chilumba and Mzuzu/Ekwendeni areas of Northern Malawi. To learn more about this charity, go to www.changeherworld.ca.

Inspired by God’s promise of abundant life, PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world.

Together we can make this vision a reality.

Please give today.

Presbyterian World Service & Development

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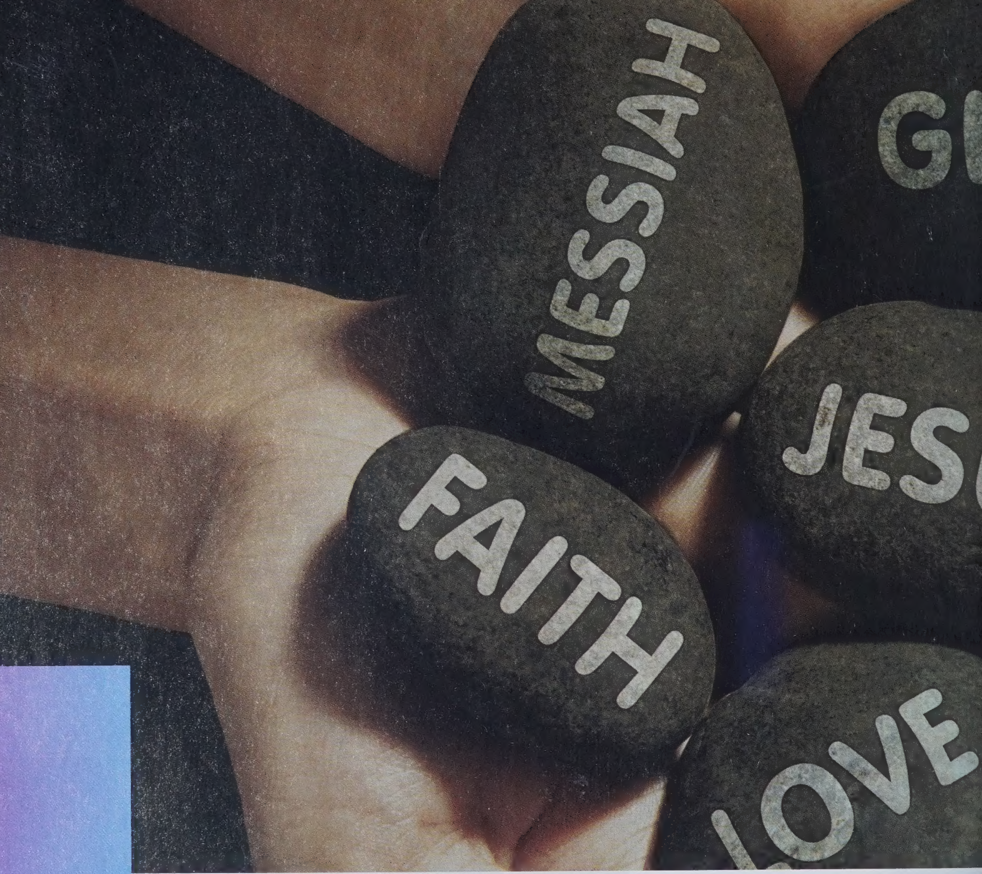
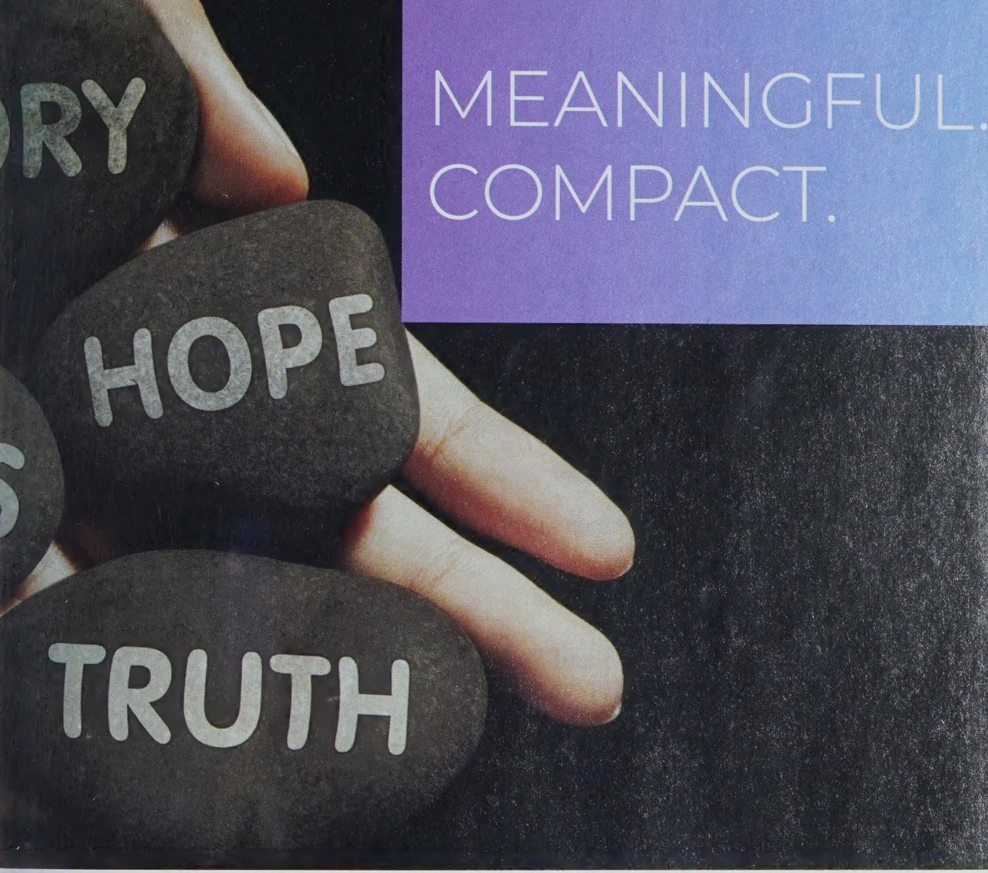

MESSIAH
FAITH
JES
LOVE
GI

Group Program

Prayer, Study, Service, and Fellowship

by Colleen Wood

MEANINGFUL. COMPACT.



Time and energy is limited. Sometimes, even the important things, like planning for your next WMS meeting, are left until the last minute. At times, the business portions of our WMS meetings might be longer, leaving less time for program. I know, some of our WMS groups are small and have limited resources.

I hope, for times like these, you will find these four "mini-meetings" valuable! They have been prepared to require almost no planning and will hopefully be meaningful, yet compact. They are based around the WMS purpose statement so will also be a great reminder of what the WMS is all about!

In this edition of *Glad Tidings* we will look at study and fellowship. In the September October edition of *Glad Tidings,* look for another two short studies as we explore prayer and service.

Meeting 1: Study

Opening Prayer:

God of love, we thank you for your constant presence in our lives. Be with us in our time together.

We live in a time of confusion. When we read the paper or listen to the news, we are troubled. We live in world of unrest. Today, we consider the importance of study, discernment, and wisdom.

Open our minds and our hearts.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Hymn: #461 – Be thou my vision

Scripture: Proverbs 2:1–5 and Philippians 2:12–18

Read Together:

The Women's Missionary Society is a community of Christians whose purpose, in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ, is to encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service, and fellowship

Reflection: Lifelong Learning

I think sometimes, once we finish our formal education, we give a sigh of relief and think great—I am done with the studying, the tests, and the late nights. Yet, as we grow older, we quickly realize we are never done with learning. Acquiring knowledge is a lifelong pursuit.

Just like the education of our earlier life is a means to goal, so is the accumulation of long-term knowledge. When we study fractions in grade 4, we learn how to divide things equally. When we learn about biology in high school, we learn a little more about how our body works. If we study medicine in university, we hope to become a doctor, help people, and make a living. If we study auto mechanics in college, we hope to be able to fix an automobile, help those who are stranded on the roads, and find work.

So, what is our long-term goal in studying now? In our passage from Proverbs

we learn that we are to acquire wisdom and apply it. In Philippians, we are also told to apply the knowledge that Paul has been giving—to put it into practice. For us in the WMS, acquiring knowledge allows us to better be involved in local and world mission.

It is through our study that we continue to learn from God how we are to act—how to put our knowledge into practice. It is only in learning more about how God calls us to act that we can ultimately know God's purpose for our life. When we study our scriptures, we learn what God is asking us to do, so that we can then act upon it.

We also learn about our work and this world. It is only in acquiring knowledge of the world that we know how to serve. Today, it is harder than ever to discern what is happening in the world. We may read the news headlines, but so often do not get a full overview of what is happening. That is where our study of the scripture and our times or prayer become essential to help us discern God's will. All of us have limited resources to give of our time and money, so we all must study and discern where we will spend our time and money.

It is through our study, our actions, and our faith, that we begin to acquire wisdom. Those who have taken time to read a new book about a challenging topic, have traveled to visit a mission project, or have listened to a mission speaker, have expanded their wisdom. Those who have served at a drop-in, led worship at a senior's home, or played games with a child at camp, have gained wisdom. Those who spend time in prayer and study of their scriptures are constantly gaining wisdom from our God.

I encourage you to find a reliable news source, to talk to wise leaders about what is happening in the world, to study your scriptures and pray, to connect with those from other communities, and to learn from those who have traveled and visited our mission projects and partners. Always keep learning

Offering:

The offering will now be received.

Offering Prayer:

Generous God, all that we have comes from you. As we share our offering, we pray that it be used to further your work in Canada and around the world. Amen.

Closing Prayer:

Let us Pray:

God of Wisdom,

Give us the wisdom to know good from evil.

Give us the wisdom to be peacemakers in times of conflict.

Give us the wisdom to know when to speak and when to listen.

Give us the wisdom to make difficult decision.

Give us the wisdom to discern your path for our life.

Give us your wisdom as we speak out against injustices in our church, our country, and around the world.

My child, if you accept my words and treasure up my commandments within you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; if you indeed cry out for insight, and raise your voice for understanding; if you seek it like silver, and search for it as for hidden treasures—then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

We ask for wisdom for our leaders.

We ask you to be with the students within our church. We pray for our children that they will grow in their knowledge of you and your world. We pray for our youth that you will encourage them in their studies. We pray for those studying through internships, or at a college or university. Help them connect this knowledge to their life and their faith.

We ask for wisdom for ourselves that transforms us and guides us each and every day. We ask for discernment as we read the words of others. And, we ask that you will guide us in daily times of prayer and study.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Optional Activity:

Bring a few copies of the newspaper to your meeting. Hand out a section or two to each member. Ask them to take five minutes to find an article that they would like to prayer about. After five minutes, have each member share their article. Invite the members to take the article home and pray for that situation over the next week.

Hymn: #626 – Lord of all power

Blessing:

Oh God of wisdom, as we leave today, grant us a desire to be a people striving to gain your wisdom. Amen.

"... and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love..."

We are one in the Spirit, *The Book of Praise*, 1997

Meeting 2: Fellowship

Opening Prayer:

ONE: Loving God, as we gather together today,
ALL: we know you are here.
ONE: Be with us in our time together.
ALL: Amen

Hymn: #471 – We are one in the Spirit

Scripture: Romans 12:4-6 and Matthew 18:19-20

Read Together:

The Women's Missionary Society is a community of Christians whose purpose, in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ, is to encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service, and fellowship

Reflection: We Need One Another

Today, we will focus on fellowship.

Take a moment, close your eyes, and think back to a friend from your childhood. Why were you friends? What did you enjoy doing together? How did they support you?

(Invite participants to share their stories if they would like to.)

Childhood friendships are important. Young children often seem incredibly adept at making friends. Five minutes at the local park, and you will often see

children running and playing with children they have never met before. Too often, I think we lose this as adults. We become more shy or less secure. Yes, we all know those people who seem to be able to talk to anyone, but for many of us, we struggle a little more around making friends as we age. Yet, many studies show that loneliness is associated with declines in physical health, mental health, and cognition.

We need one another. And, we certainly need one another to accomplish the mission work of the church. Within your own WMS group, I am sure you can think of something that each one of you is good at—a gift that you bring. Perhaps one of you has great insight into the scripture. Maybe you are the one that provides great hospitality and ensures that our bodies are fed and we are welcomed. One of you may contribute more financially. Another one, might be great at running the meetings. Maybe you have traveled or are an avid news reader and can provide detailed information on our world. Together, we are stronger.

Together, we are the body of Christ and that is pretty amazing. Together, we fulfill God's purposes. Together, we challenge and encourage one another in our faith. Together, we pool our resources and build hostels for children in India, encourage missionaries around the world, and contribute to places of healing for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

Continue meeting together. Know that the time you take to connect with one another, is of great benefit. It allows you to go out and be able to love others. And, continue to work together and support the mission work of your group, your congregation, your community, Canada, and the world.

Prayer:

God of Love, we thank you for our WMS group. We thank you that we are able to meet and support one another. For every member here, and the gifts they bring, we give you thanks.

We pray for those who are away today. Bring healing to those who are ill and protect those who are traveling.

Brother, sister let me serve you

The Book of Praise, 1997

We thank you for the work we do as a national WMS. We pray for the Presbyterian Women's Gathering that it will be a time of renewal for the women of our church, and will encourage us to speak out for justice. We pray for our two Together We Can projects, the Kenora Fellowship Centre, and for projects working to reduce gender-based violence in

Haiti. We pray for our partnerships with women around the world, especially the Tumekatana partnership in Africa. We prayer for our WMS national executive as they make decisions and guide the work of the WMS.

We thank you for those who work in the name of The Presbyterian Church in Canada around the world. Protect them and guide their work.

Thank you that we can continue to meet together, encourage one another, and support local, national, and world mission. In Jesus name, Amen.

Optional Activity:

Take a large piece of Bristol board and write the name of your WMS group in the centre of the sheet. Ask each person, to write one or two things on this sheet that this group has accomplished together. Thank God for this group and what has been accomplished.

Offering:

The offering will now be received.

Offering Prayer:

Generous God, take these our offering, join them together, and use them to bring hope to this world. Amen.

Hymn: # 634 – Brother, sister let me serve you

Closing:

God, be with each one here as we journey onwards until we meet again.

"I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow,
till we've seen this journey through."

When Strangers Become Friends—People on the Move in Hungary

by Stephanie Chunoo, Hungary

I have been living in Budapest for six months and I can confidently say that it feels a lot more like home—the weather is warming up and the city is bustling with tourists. I am now used to my lovely neighbourhood. The adults and the kids that I work with are more familiar with me and I with them. I am also starting to understand the importance of organizations like Kalunba , and my service here.

The work that Kalunba does is extremely vital, given the current situation of refugees in Hungary. Many Hungarians are suspicious of migrants, especially since the Hungarian government regularly bombards its citizens with negative comments, portraying migrants

and refugees as people who are linked to crime and terrorism. These comments provoke fear among the people, many of whom are convinced that their Christian country will turn increasingly Islamic with each incoming migrant.

The prime minister, Viktor Orbán, strongly supports an anti-migration platform, and his Fidesz party won a third term in office in 2018. Since its re-election in April, Hungary's parliament has passed a law making claims for asylum almost impossible as well as a series of laws that criminalize any individual or group that offers to help an illegal immigrant claim asylum. The legislation restricts the ability of Non-Government Organizations to act in asylum cases and was passed in defiance of the European Union and of human rights groups.

Everyone that works at Kalunba is passionate about their work and understands the importance of the role they play, big or small. There are times when it is very stressful because, like many other organizations, Kalunba tries to do their best for their clients. Unfortunately, with the political situation towards refugees being so precarious, so are the resources. But these stressful situations always remind me why my service here is necessary and why God has put this opportunity in my path.

Congratulations to Rev. Dr. Paul McLean

The Board of Governors of Knox College is pleased to announce that the degree Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa) was conferred upon the Rev. Dr. Paul McLean on May 8, 2019, in recognition of outstanding service in the completed and ongoing work of Bible translation together with the translation teams of The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT).

In conferring this degree, Knox College lifts up the partnership between The Presbyterian Church in Canada and The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan in Bible translation, especially the work of the translation teams among Taiwan's Hakka people and Taiwan's indigenous peoples.

Paul accepted the DD in honour and recognition of his beloved coworkers and dedicated it to their ongoing teamwork and partnership in mission.

Paul continues his translation work, spending 7–8 months of the year at home in Toronto where he reviews computerized draft translations and corresponds regularly with his coworkers via the internet. During three 6-week long visits each year in Taiwan, Paul and his coworkers review their work together in person. He visits Hakka or indigenous churches around the island where he preaches and promotes the new translations.

In the Society

Synodical

Central Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda Synodical held their annual meeting April 26–27 at St. Paul's Church, Port Hope, with the theme Spread the Seed of Kindness. President Mary Veale-Parker conducted the business efficiently.

Janet Brewer, national WMS President, spoke about the Regional Women's Gathering, Shine, held in BC in March 2019. About 100 women registered, which is good news since we have no Synodicals in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, or Manitoba. Participants enjoyed hearing from Mary Jo Leddy, Founder of Romero House, and watching the Hummingbird Ministry dancers.

Janet also attended Tumekutana 2018 in South Africa. Tumekutana means "we have come together" to share common problems and their faith. The theme was Women You are the Image of God based on Gen 1:27. Equality, self-esteem, and empowerment were stressed by the speakers. Janet helped in the Prayer Room and shared powerful one-on-one prayers with the African women. This conference is held for African women and the five Canadians were there to just listen and support. The next Tumekutana will be in Cameroon 2021.

Cathy Reid, a member of Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada and National WMS vice-president, presented on the community of Chipagala in Malawi. In Chipagala, The Mvano Guild has 120 members and is equivalent to our WMS except they all wear the same material wrapped around their skirts and are fined 10 cents if they don't. While visiting, Cathy took craft supplies, sports equipment, Lord's Prayer necklaces, and new shoes for the 100 children at the school. She thanked the WMS for the money to buy land for the women to cultivate produce to sell. They also gave a sewing machine to make bags and hearts to sell. Previously, Cathy's congregation took 2,000 eye glasses for the Eye Assessment Clinic.

Rev. Glynis Williams presented on The Changing Face of International Ministries. Long-term mission positions are hard to fill so short-term

ones are better than none. Currently there are nine mission staff and six students serving in five countries. Grants have been given to 16 countries to recruit and send mission staff. She showed slides of two interns in Malawi and Hungary and others in Nepal and the Zomba Theological College. The church in Nepal is the fastest growing Christian church. We also heard about the Prison Ministry run by Malawian volunteers who offer Bible study and counseling.

Dr. Tori Smit led the Bible study, Remember your Baptism, based on Ephesians 4:17–5:2. The vows made by our parents at baptism and reaffirmed at confirmation, should be kept all our lives. Tori also installed the officers.

Rev. Dr. Douglas Brown, St. Paul's minister, led Communion and the Benediction.

Presbyterial

Bruce-Grey Presbyterial held their 105th Annual meeting at Geneva Presbyterian church in Chesley ON on April 11. Approximately 40 members attended from 12 groups. Let's Mend Our Bridges was the theme which was very appropriate considering what had occurred in Chesley in the past year. The main bridge in the town had suffered severe damage the previous winter due to a buildup of ice and the town had to rebuild the entire bridge. The new bridge had just opened recently and now the town is reunited (or mended).

The Worship service focused on how scripture reinforces the importance of mending/fixing broken relationships and resolving conflicts. If we don't attempt to do this then our relationship with God will suffer as seen in 1 John 4:20. We need God's help to make the first move and speak to someone that we have been avoiding and in the end we may never "see eye to eye but, we can still walk hand in hand."

The business part of the meeting took place with reports being reviewed and discussed. Our Treasurer pointed out that despite a drop in members, our givings were higher than the previous year.

Esther McGibbon gave an interesting account of several missionaries who had originated in the Chesley area, many had been connected to Geneva Presbyterian church.

Rev. Andy Cornell from Renewal Fellowship spoke to us about the purpose of this group. He stressed how the standards set forth in the Living Faith and the Bible should be followed. We cannot become closer to God if our prayers are not spirit led.

Rev. Randy Benson conducted the Communion service and the meeting closed with the Hymn, I the Lord of Sea and Sky.

~Linda Doll

Brockville Presbyterial held its annual meeting at Knox Presbyterian

Church in Morrisburg on March 26. It was a beautiful sunny Spring day, in sharp contrast to the original meeting date of January 29, which ended up being cold and stormy!

Bringing Darkness to Light in Mission was the theme. Janet Jones and Catherine Blatch led the opening Worship, with behind-the-scene assistance from Rev. Marianne Emig Carr who was not able to be present for the meeting. The parable of the growing seed from Mark 4:26–29 was the focus with a reflection on scattering, waiting, and reaping.

The morning speaker was Patricia Grainger, who was a participant in the PWS&D mission trip to Malawi in 2018. Patricia provided a very informative and up-to-date overview of development and relief work in Malawi, including information on the extensive flooding that happened at the end of March. Through mission trip pictures and experiences, Patricia shared many 'bright light' stories:

- Maternal and child health care programs are reaching moms with care, support and information.
- A healthier future is being made possible through such projects as upgraded medical facilities, training of new health care workers, and rural outreach.
- Other life changing programs in Malawi focus on conservation agriculture training, care and education for people suffering from AIDS, and building sustainable livelihoods.

Patricia also spoke on the Blantyre Synod's prison ministry which is providing much-needed optimism for prisoners, whose lives are being changed when the presence, joy, and hope of God is shared through the Good News.

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Gaver, Ministry Animator, Presbytery of Seaway-

Installation of Brockville Executiv

Glengarry, led an afternoon workshop entitled *Challenges of Intercultural Ministries*. With a power-point presentation and three small group activities, Cheryl tested the group to think about what is important to ministry.

We first looked at an example of a fictional mission work and considered what aspects the mission workers were doing right and doing wrong. We looked at our assumptions, the importance of respect, listening, and working alongside one another.

The next activity focused on what is culture, and how much of our worldview, our norms and values, we bring into our reading of scripture. The third activity centered on three questions Christians need to ask:

1. What is the core gospel message?
2. What is the enculturated gospel?
3. What have we added on or changed?

Through the workshop, we were challenged to reflect on both the importance of communicating the gospel in ways that bridged cultural differences, and how we do so.

In addition to two wonderful presentations, the presbyterial spent time in business with the receipt and adoption of reports. The day also included a delicious lunch meal, sing-a-long, and a reflective Memoriam honouring four faithful members: Henny Donkersteeg, Mary Ross, Margaret Reynolds, and Lotte Honti. “Well done, good, and faithful servants.”

Prior to adjournment, the officers were installed, courtesies were extended, and prayer was offered for the coming presbyterial year. The annual meeting closed with the singing, Lord of Light, whose Name and Splendor, followed by prayer and thanks offered to all involved in the meeting. It was a wonderful, educational, and inspirational day that “shone brightly” throughout.

~Donna McIlveen

Brockville Presbyterial met for its Spring Rally on May 28 at St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church in Winchester with the theme, Shining God’s Gift of Love. On a wet spring day, over 25 WMS members and guests enjoyed coffee, tea, and muffins and had a chance to socialize prior to the meeting.

President Janet Jones welcomed the attendees in her opening remarks. Worship was led by the Kemptville group.

The business portion of the meeting followed, with review of minutes, correspondence, and reports from the executive. Janet also spoke about projects taking place in the Presbyterial including collecting stories about women from the area who were missionaries, either in Canada or around the world, whose stories need to be recorded before they are forgotten. This is especially

true for women missionaries, who often did not marry and have children, which is how memories of women are historically recorded.

The theme for the next three Presbyterial meetings is “Sharing God’s Gifts.” Today, the focus was “Sharing God’s Gift of Love.” Rev. Bruce Kemp, minister at St. Paul’s, shared his experiences working with the Rotary Club to build a new elementary school in the southern part of Ecuador in 2010. (Bruce was part of a Rotary Club in Edmonton at the time.)

The previous school had no source of heat, which was a concern because the temperatures in the mountains (at an altitude of 2500 m) averaged about 8 degrees C and the children walked 1–2 hours each way to school.

Stones and cinderblocks for the new school had to be carried up by hand or by horseback, and all the work was done by hand. Even the students would stay after school to help. The local military also helped with the construction. Four buildings were built—two classrooms, a kitchen, and washroom facilities. The kitchen was especially important because the children came from poor families and their school lunch was often their only meal of the day. Washrooms were necessary as well to encourage proper hygiene, which included showers that the families could use. The Rotary Club also provided school uniforms, which were required, but which families could not afford.

Bruce also shared how he worked with Rotary in a different part of Ecuador to help install “sanitation units” next to homes, consisting of a toilet, shower, and sink. These sanitation units significantly improved hygiene, as water was frequently contaminated by runoff from local farm fields. Bruce talked about his motivation to get involved, which sprang from his desire to serve others in a “hands-on” way.

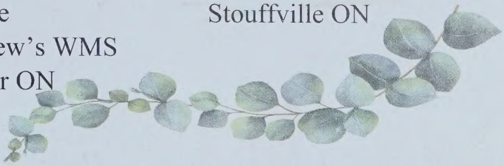
Remembering

Madeline Knox
St. Andrew's WMS
Belleville ON

Grace Cameron
Arthur Circle WMS,
Knox
Goderich ON

Kathleen Caughell
Vera Mortimer
Verneda Russell
Jean Yule
St. Andrew's WMS
Kitchener ON

Irene Field
St. James Presbyterian
Church
Stouffville ON



After a delicious lunch provided by the St. Paul's Presbyterian Women, Rev. Bruce Kemp and Ann Langabeer led everyone in a rousing hymn sing on guitar and piano. This was then followed by a game of Bible Front Page Challenge, where everyone was asked to guess a particular biblical character based on dramatic readings by selected individuals. Great fun and merriment was had by all!

Following courtesies and the blessing, everyone went out singing, Will you come and follow me?

Maitland Presbyterial held their Spring Rally at Knox Presbyterian Church in Kincardine, on May 27, with the theme, Be Involved in Missions through SERVICE.

Judy Watt of Kincardine welcomed all with prayer and song and South Kinloss WMS led the worship on Service.

Ruth Dorey of Kincardine introduced the guest speaker, Rev. Ken Craig of Kincardine Baptist Church, who spoke of his many mission trips to Haiti to build a house for a needy family. There is a team of volunteers from Kincardine who try to go once a year to do this along with raising $16,000 a year for the supplies to build the house. We saw a power point presentation of several illustrations of these trips from Kincardine and were told that $35 a month would send a child to school. The schools are all taught by rote as they have no text books or supplies, and the students wear uniforms and are very disciplined and respectful of their teachers. The children are all given one meal a day at the school.

An honorary life membership was presented to Barb Stuart of Kincardine and Wingham led the In Memoriam.

Brussels WMS announced they are disbanding after 163 years. Following Roll Call, closing music and prayer, Belmore led in Grace before enjoying refreshments served by Kincardine and Molesworth.

National Presbyterian Women's Gathering

Through the Waters

DATE: May 15–18, 2020

PLACE: Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Richmond Hill, Ontario

REGISTRATION FEES: **$395** before November 30, 2019
$475 after November 30, 2019 and before March 31, 2020

INQUIRIES: womensgathering@presbyterian.ca
416-441-1111 or 800-619-7301

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Glad Tidings

September/October 2019

20 Thanksgiving Worship
by Huda Kandalaft

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Glad Tidings
September/October 2019
Volume 95, No. 5
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Funded by the Government of Canada | Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2019 subscription rate $20.00 plus applicable taxes: $21 for AB, BC, SK; $22.60 for ON, MB; $23 for QC, NB, NF, NS, PEI. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada for our publishing activities.

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24 (NRSV)

Let's be honest. Every morning, when that alarm goes off, do you start your day rejoicing? I know I don't. For me, my alarm is my daughter who is most definitely a morning person. She bounces out of her bed, happily greets the dog, and then comes to greet me. Some days, I could deal with her being just a little less joy filled at 7 a.m.! Yet we are called to rejoice and be glad in each day.

We don't know exactly when this Psalm was penned, but it was likely written by David after a triumphant battle or success. Earlier in Psalm 118, the Psalmist describes the challenges he has been facing, but he also speaks of God's help. In his distress, God was present. God has granted him victory. So, in thanksgiving the Psalmist rejoices.

We all go through bad times. We all go through times when we wonder, how long Lord? We all face challenges. Some days it is hard to walk in joy. Some days joy is a choice and it is in only following Christ that we can make that choice.

By now, you have likely heard that the *Glad Tidings* is ending. For some, this will be sad news. For some, this will be another sign of the decline in the WMS. Psalm 118 ends with the words, "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever." God is still present in the work of the WMS, and more importantly, in the lives of WMS members.

Sometimes, we need to change our perspective to find our joy. Yes, *Glad Tidings* is ending, but most endings mean new opportunities. The WMS is thinking about new ways to serve its members. And, there are still a few new editions of *Glad Tidings* coming your way that will be filled with great resources, inspiring articles, and expressions of joy. Watch for our Christmas edition, and our final edition sometime in early 2020.

I hope you will also consider joining the WMS at the 2020 Presbyterian Women's Gathering. It will be a great event as we celebrate, learn, share, and pray together. Come together with the women of the PCC as we continue to rejoice and be glad.

Finding God in Unexpected Places

by Shaunna MacQuarrie

Photo: Liddycoat, Thorold News

I was raised in the fresh, open air of Northwestern Ontario by a father and grandfather who hunted, fished, and built cabins and docks on Rainy Lake, and a mother and grandmother who were both artists and lovers of the beauty of Creation. My grandmother often quipped that nature was her favourite church—where she felt closest to God. I was taught very early in my life that being in nature—being *with* nature—was nourishing to mind, body, and spirit. Taught also by the dear First Nations companions of my grandparents, I learned that if I opened myself up and allowed myself to just listen, Creation would speak to me. It would tell me what it needs, what my role is in caring for it, and it would return the favour by offering me solitude, peace and comfort, food for my body, a glimpse into its delicate ecosystem, life lessons, and so much more. Harmonious. Watch, listen, learn. Even now as an adult who lives in a much more urban area of our country, I often find myself returning to—*running to*—nature when I am feeling overwhelmed. Its ability to bring me back to centre never disappoints, even when the busyness of day-to-day looms heavy in the back of my mind.

My husband and I began beekeeping four years ago. We are often asked how or why we decided to jump into this adventure. We don't really have a decent answer for that question, except to say that beekeeping kind of found us. Both of us had always been curious about beekeeping—even as young adults we had talked about the possibility of someday keeping one or two hives. Like many people in the world today, we were concerned about dwindling bee populations, but had no idea how we could contribute to the positive changes needed to help turn things around. A couple of friends from our church had previously kept bees and had some beekeeping gear, and after some casual conversations, offered to pass it along to us. We had friends with some acreage about 15 minutes away from where we live near downtown who were willing to share a little corner with us. It was the perfect storm of circumstances that set us on our way. We had a location, intense curiousity, and a few tools to give it a try, so we did. In hindsight, it is easy now to reflect on how God laid out these perfect steps that led us to become part of His beekeeping team.

To say that this whole adventure has been 'trial by fire' would be an understatement. We went into this venture with very basic knowledge about the art of beekeeping and had no idea what this journey would have in store for us. We assumed that we would eventually end up with a

I was taught very early in my life that being in nature—being with nature—was nourishing to mind, body, and spirit.

little bit of honey for our family to enjoy, but really didn't know what kinds of goals we should be setting beyond keeping the bees alive. What we have found, as we've navigated the steep learning curve and endured painstaking hours of labour-intensive work, is that this journey is so much bigger and deeper than we ever expected it to be. We have made many mistakes, learned from them, and have grown in our skills and confidence over time. But the biggest lessons have come from remembering my roots—the importance of listening to what Creation is trying to teach us.

[Beekeeping] is an exciting and fulfilling journey—one that has brought us closer together as a couple and each of us closer to God.

Watching the synchronized perfection of how the bees all work as one is hard to describe. It is spiritual. It is like beholding the very essence of Creation—the breath of our Lord at work in our world. There is something tremendously soothing about the thrum that rises through the air when we check our beehives. Sometimes we are so lost in the moment of watching and listening that we forget what our immediate task is. Bees have their own language and as beekeepers, part of our job is to let them teach us that language. Watch, listen, learn.

I remember some things when we first began beekeeping. Our nervousness convinced us that we more or less needed full body armour, complete with gloves up to our elbows. No skin showing and several layers of protection 'just in case'. Each visit, we wasted precious time gearing up and down and were miserably hot and uncomfortable in Niagara's muggy, summer heat. Today, we generally only wear a veil, no gloves, and we rarely suit up more than that. While we've decided that our comfort and hydration are very important when we are working for hours on-end, the main reason for this is to allow the bees to teach us.

With our growing confidence,

we have been able to open ourselves up more fully to being taught. The bees—Creation—speaks to us. Bees tell us what they like and don't like and if we are cool, comfortable, and have bare hands, we can learn to work with them in a way that pleases them. Respects them. In return, they are able to thrive and provide our family with delicious honey. We continue to learn our role in caring for and protecting our bees and as thanks, we have been blessed with a growing number of thriving colonies that each have stronger, happier bees. Perhaps we are living out our own version of The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25. Constantly seeking to do right by what we have been blessed with. We currently keep approximately 30 colonies on three different properties around Niagara and are continuing to grow. It is an exciting and fulfilling journey—one that has brought us closer together as a couple and each of us closer to God.

Every time we work with our bees, our spiritual cups overflow right alongside the jars of honey. We enjoy the stillness and refuge that working in nature provides us. We are blessed to work with bees who reward our kindness and patience with the promise that as long as we continue to listen to them and allow them to teach us, they will return the favour by nourishing us—mind, body, and spirit. Watch. Listen. Learn.

Photo: Liddycoat, Thorold News

Crieff's Boundless Potential

by Colleen Wood

crieff hills COMMUNITY
A Retreat & Conference Centre
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

Crieff Hills Retreat Centre is a ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and I recently had the chance to sit down with their Director, the Rev. Dr. Kristine O'Brien.

What struck me most about my conversation with Kristine, is that Kristine sees the potential of Crieff as boundless. She sees Crieff as an amazing place of ministry, and she wants to meet people that visit where they are at. She realizes the spiritual need of those that come and wants Crieff to be a place where their souls are fed.

For those who haven't visited Crieff, I asked Kristine to describe it. She says it is an undiscovered gem, an oasis in the world. It provides green spaces to those who visit. She talks about the recent science behind forest bathing, and how spending time in nature is beneficial to both the body and soul.

She also says that there are diverse spaces at Crieff. Many come to Crieff just for the day. Preachers will come to Crieff for the day, settle in, and write their sermons. They treat it as a rural Starbucks! Although Crieff has Wi-Fi, it is not tech driven, so it provides space away. Others come to Crieff and stay in one of the retreat houses and they are able to cook their own meals and relax. There are also spaces for groups to hold larger retreats at Crieff. They have time to learn or have meetings, while they enjoy prepared meals in McLean Hall. Crieff recently hired a new chef to help deepen their connection to local food producers and develop specialty menus.

Finally, Crieff continues to host their own programs. Their manna days are very popular events for leaders in the church who want to grow. They also host nature events, a women's retreat, and other events throughout the year.

As many know, Crieff has a rich history:

Colonel John Bain Maclean, the founder of Maclean's magazine, The

Financial Post, and Maclean-Hunter publishers, was born and raised in the small village of Crieff, Ontario, where his father was the minister at Knox Presbyterian Church. After establishing a successful career in Toronto, he returned to Crieff in 1916 to visit and found the churchyard in disrepair. He then led efforts to restore both the grounds and the cemetery with the help of the Olmstead Brothers landscape architectural firm.

In recognition of his service, the church gave Col. Maclean the old manse and an acre of land, which became his country home. He bought adjacent farmland (300 acres) and created an industrious farm with a dairy herd, pigs, grain fields, orchards, and about 100 acres of reforested land. His estate, known as Crieff Hills Farm, was famous for its beautiful landscape and gardens.

When Col. Maclean died in 1950 he left 250 acres of the farm and its buildings to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, along with money invested to maintain the properties.

(https://crieffhills.com/about/our-story/)

Kristine loves the rural history that is part of the Crieff story. They already produce honey and thanks to a government grant that has allowed them to hire three students this summer, they are expanding their gardens. They also recently received grants to plant a heritage orchard.

She also thinks that Crieff can be a place that can help with reconciliation with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Crieff acknowledges their land was the traditional lands of the Attawandaron people before Europeans settled here. Crieff also acknowledges other First Nations neighbours, including the Haudenosaunee, the Anishnaabe, and The Métis nation. "We seek a new relationship with the Original Peoples of this land based on honour and deep respect."

As they renovate some of the older buildings, they are choosing historic paint colours, leaving areas of the brick visible; and the school house, which now serves as the dining room, will soon include canvas prints that will show pictures of past students. Obviously, Crieff's facilities must be comfortable, but they can still honour the past.

Crieff is also moving towards becoming more accessible. This is very important to Kristine. Current renovations on McLean Hall, the dining room, will make it more accessible to wheelchairs and scooters. They are also adding an accessible/ gender-neutral washroom to this space. Accessible accommodation is available in the Pines.

Kristine says that the Christian identity of Crieff is important. They are in a unique position because many of the people who visit Crieff, would not visit a church. She thinks Crieff has the ability to reach people who the church can't if we share who we are and listen to who they are. For those who are Christian, Crieff also has an important place in their journey. It's not that God doesn't speak to us in countless places, but here at Crieff we slow down enough to listen.

Crieff really does want to be a place that equips church leaders to serve better. Kristine believes that those who come to Crieff are better able to go back out to serve because they have experienced quiet—Crieff is good for the soul. You can come and be quiet and come and learn.

Crieff also has a strong focus on justice and the environment.

The members of the WMS can continue their support of Crieff by telling their stories of Crieff, attending events, and encouraging staff. As well, they are always looking for quilts (new or heritage), knitted dishcloths, perennial plants and shrubs, and donations to their accessibility fund.

In a world of noise and secularization, it is wonderful that the church holds onto this wonderful place of quiet and faith.

A heritage fruit tree gets a new home.

Renovations started in the school house.

Lessons From Around the Dinner Church Table

by Andrea Perrett

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

When I started seminary, a wise friend encouraged me to be content in my decision to answer God's call to begin school, but to not worry too much about what would lie on the other side of my degree. I was told it was my job to get through the seminary classes, while God was the one working on plans that would come after graduation.

These were wise, and necessary, words of encouragement. Coming from a career as a registered dietitian, I had been given a vision of combining the worlds of physical and spiritual health through the intersection of food and theology. I was conflicted, as I felt called into ministry, but I was not feeling called into traditional congregational ministry. I was not sure if there was a place for me in either the faith or health care worlds when I finished my degree.

However, I listened to my friend's advice and attempted to faithfully follow the path God had laid out for me.

Then, during my final year of seminary, I was given the opportunity to help create and lead a dinner church. For two years, I spent nearly every Sunday night gathered with a group of people for dinner and worship. St. Andy's Community Table, as it became known, was born out of the Centre for Missional Leadership at St Andrew's Hall. As a way to help equip missional leaders, this experiment in church planting was an unexpected and welcomed addition to my seminary experience.

Starting during the Fall of 2016, through dark rainy nights and warm autumn evenings, I was part of a small, but faithful group who gathered together to share a meal and worship God. Our initial location was the basement of West Point Grey Presbyterian Church, a small congregation located just off of the University of British Columbia (UBC) campus. This congregation was most generous in giving free reign to our leadership group of two staff from St. Andrew's Hall and two students, and allowing us to grow into a new expression of worship on our own.

The format for our evenings was simple, based around our three priorities of Faith–Food–Friends. Each Sunday, at around 4:30 p.m., people would start to gather. A variety of decaf coffee and tea was offered as people caught up with one another. Shortly before five, a homemade meal, kept warm in insulated casserole-carrying bags, was brought into the hall. Always prepared with love, our rotating schedule of volunteers would bring a hot meal to feed the 20–30 people who had gathered. Pasta, soups, and chili were some of our favourite meals, always with an added veggie tray or salad to bulk up the meal, and to satisfy my dietitian heart.

After the food had been blessed and the children had been served first, we all sat around tables in small clusters and discussed questions related to the weekly theme. We took turns drawing questions from the gold jar that had been placed on the centre of the table. Some were light-hearted, get-to-know-you questions that would be answered immediately, while others which required some deeper thought were left for later on during the meal. As the children finished their meals, they would filter into the next room to go run off some steam, as the adults continued their discussion as a larger group, sharing what had been talked about around their own table.

When the plates were cleared off the tables, and the children were back in the room, we would start our time of singing. Reading the lyrics off of the placements we had made ahead of time, the music was kept simple, a combination of a couple of guitars or the piano, based on which of the musicians from our community were present that evening. Scripture was also read off of the placemats, as long as too much food had not been spilled on them. As we welcomed our guest preaching for the evening to give their best seven-minute sermon, popsicles were handed out to the eagerly awaiting children. We had sermon series, such as *Sins We Love, The Virtues We Need, and God's Odd Jobs*. After a time of prayer, we would wrap up with one more song before sending the group back out into the world.

We had set out to create a new worshipping community that had a low barrier to enter, but one that demanded a high commitment from participants. We put a priority on hospitality and being a welcoming community. Our numbers never swelled above 40, but some weeks over half our participants were children. We maintained a core group of 25 people, and over time had over 100 participants cycle through our dinner church. Yet, over time we struggled to attract new Christians and we were never able to integrate those with the existing congregation whose building we were using.

God had led our group into new territory and with the help of the Spirit we were able to accomplish more than we ever set out to do. However, after two years of weekly dinner gatherings, we made the decision to wrap up our time at St. Andy's Community Table.

I feel very privileged to have been part of this experiment. Looking back, I am amazed how this experience has continued to send me in a direction that I never could have imagined. At the beginning of seminary, I never thought that God would be using me to start new worshipping communities. I was not prepared to hear that I would be a church planter. However, since St. Andy's has wrapped up, God has continued to guide me down a path of starting food-centered new worshipping communities, including a dinner hosting networking and a bread baking circle. The Holy Spirit is on the move in our denomination helping to sprout up new churches of all shapes and sizes. I am honoured that I am able to join in with this work and I cannot wait to see where things will be in another few years.

Andrea Perrett is the Centre for Missional Leadership Associate in New Witnessing Communities at St. Andrew's Hall. She is passionate about seeing new worshipping communities flourish and thrive. As an Associate in New Witnessing Communities, she is currently curating the Breaking Bread Network, a dinner hosting collective for the Lower Mainland. She is also the Assistant Director of Cyclical Cascadia, a church planting support initiative (in partnership with the Northwest Coast Presbytery in Washington state). Andrea has previously created and led a dinner church, St. Andy's Community Table, and has served at West Point Grey Presbyterian Church in Vancouver. Also a practicing Registered Dietitian, Andrea loves exploring the connection between physical health and spiritual health and what that can mean for Christian witnessing communities. Andrea has a MDiv from Vancouver School of Theology where she is currently working on a ThM in Missional Theology. Although a prairie girl at heart, after six years in Vancouver, Andrea and her husband have embraced the West coast life and enjoy road biking and taking their goofy black lab on canoe trips.

Snipe Hunt

by David Webber

She showed up a few days days ago. After the passage of time, I have come to suspect that she was a gift. She was one that I am pretty sure I knew existed but can't really remember actually having seen before. Perhaps I had seen one like her in rapid departure from under my feet, while bashing my way through marshland in search of mallards. I am pretty sure that I had seen one like her once or twice, thundering up from under my feet with a raspy "scaaip," darting away in feverish zigzags, too soon gone to identify. But I had never seen one like her before where I could really examine the species.

And now there she was, at least one representative of the species, right on my lawn basking in the shoreline Autumn sun with deep purple-blue lake water reflecting behind her. She sat low on my poorly manicured lawn. She was probing for something. Every so often she pumped up and down like she was doing deep knee bends. Then all at once, she pulled something long and slender out of the dirt. It took me a couple of seconds to realize that the long slender thing, which was almost half the length of her body, was in fact her beak.

For the next half-hour, I sat on the deck in a lawn chair with my elbows supported by the arms of the chair as I caught binocular eyefuls of this amazing creature I knew existed but had never really seen before. She was the most elusive and secretive Wilson's snipe, now blatantly and unabashedly laid before me to ogle. She gave new meaning to the term 'snipe hunt'.

And what I saw caused me to ponder or perhaps wonder. The snipe kept probing with her amazingly long beak, all the time excitedly pumping up and down on her longish legs between probes. I wondered, "What the heck is this all about." I continued in my observations hoping that the mystery would eventually be resolved. Finally, after considerable time and effort, she withdrew her long slender beak slowly from the soil for the umpteenth time.

Drooped from it, almost pasta like, was a long and apparently delectable worm. She threw her head back, bobbed up and down a couple of more times, and then swallowed hard. The mystery was solved, or at least partly. Only those who probe get deliciously rewarded.

I have this habit; I think it is a good one, of observing nature and drawing spiritual insight from my observations. As I watched the Wilson's snipe persistently and excitedly probing for worms, I started to think about me, God, and his Word.

I have been taught and I believe that the Bible is the Word of God. The Bible is the source of God's self revelation to me. But that being said, I must confess that I find I often have a difficult relationship with the Bible. On one hand, I find it so easy to just simply read it and not really probe around it expecting God to say anything significant to me. At this level, the Bible seems to devolve to simply words. On the other hand, it is even easier not to bother reading it at all. At this level, the Bible seems to become just a spiritual object like some kind of silver chalice, often instilling guilt because I know I really "should" read it regularly.

For four years now, I have been retired from active ministry. Though I don't miss being overly busy with all kinds of ordained ministry stuff, I certainly miss the discipline of being required to probe a text of scripture in detail on a weekly basis. For more than 32 years, I was required to spend at least 15 or 20 hours in sermon preparation each week. At least half that time was spent probing a text and listening for what God was saying to me. In order to preach a text, I first of all had to hear the text.

My episode with the little Wilson's snipe probing around for worms on our beach reminded me of my relationship with the Word of God during my preaching days. I wanted to be like that little snipe hunting for worms when it came to God's Word, persistently and excitedly probing it and seeking its delectable rewards. The conclusion of the snipe hunt has led me to make a resolution: I am going to rededicate myself to probing God's Word and listening for what God wants to say to me. I may not have any sermons to preach anymore, but I am going to discipline myself to a ministry of listening, probing, and seeking the delicious words of God for me in the Bible. Only those who probe get deliciously rewarded. What about you?

Rev. David Webber, now retired, was one of the founders of Cariboo Presbyterian Church in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region; he served God in this ministry for many years. He has also written a number of books, including When the Aspen Flowers: Blooming in the Creator's Garden.

In the July-August edition of *Glad Tidings*, we printed our first two mini-meetings. In this edition, we explore service. Our fourth study on prayer will be in the November-December *Glad Tidings.*

Meeting 3: Service

Opening Prayer:

ONE: Praise the Lord!
ALL: It is good to sing our praise to God.
ONE: Serve the Lord!
ALL: And rejoice in our many blessings.

Hymn: #655 – Give me Oil

Scripture: Luke 6:27–36

Read Together:

The Women's Missionary Society is a community of Christians whose purpose, in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ, is to encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service, and fellowship.

Reflection:

We heard powerful words today from the book of Luke. Words that can change the world. Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you. Wow! Amazing words. But, can we really do it?

How can we love those people who hurt us, or those that we love?
How can we love those people that we disagree with?
Can we really do good things to those who have abused us or cheated us?
Usually, when someone hurts us, we want to hurt them back.

Yet, this is what we are told to do. This is our choice to make. We are called to not only serve our friends, our family, and our church community. We are called to even serve those who do bad things to us. We are called to serve those who we have no relationship with. We are called to serve those who are different than us.

There are so many examples of people who have made this choice. I think of Father Greg Boyle. Back in the 1980s, he became the priest of Dolores Mission Church. It was located in the community with the highest concentration of gang activity in Los Angeles. When those around him only saw gang members and criminals, he made a choice to see people in need. He began Homeboy Industries, a gang intervention, rehabilitation, and re-entry program.

"We work with the population that nobody desires to work with, and it's a principle of this place that we stand with them," says Father Greg who loves those who have committed horrible and violent crimes. His love allows them to know love, and learn to love others.

I also think of Rebecca Sherbino and Colleen Graham. They made the choice to serve others through the creation of The Raw Carrot. While others may resent those on the Ontario Disability Support Program, they hire them to cook and package handcrafted soup. They fulfil their desire to help others to "live a purposeful life."

I'm sure in your own community you know those who are serving others and sharing God's love with those who are marginalized or hard to love. Think about the mother who continues to send gifts or notes to a child who has severed that relationship. Think about someone who visits a friend in a prison. Think about those who continually forgive a family member or friend. Think about those who always show up, even when they would rather be almost anywhere else. Think

about those who are always trying to learn more about the world and understand others.

Interestingly enough, volunteering or serving is actually good for us! It lowers stress and depression levels. It builds energy and self-confidence. It can distract us from our own life and any problems we might be experiencing. So, not only is sharing our love good for others, it is good for ourselves!

Obviously, we all have different abilities and need to find the right place to serve. This may change as we age or are in different life stages. At times, you might be able to serve at a food bank every week, take on WMS leadership, and care for your grandchildren daily. At other times, your service might be a phone call to a friend or writing a 'thinking of you' note. Your service might include praying for our missionaries across Canada and around the world. It might include giving a can of soup to a foodbank. For others, it might include serving in India, Israel/Palestine, or Africa during your retirement.

Although it is great to serve, I do think that sometimes we may need to step back from some of our service and allow others to serve us. After a recent illness or loss, you may need to take care of yourself, but once you are able to do so, look for small ways to begin serving again. Sometimes even when you are ill, God gives you a way to serve. Your kind words to those who are serving you are an act of service in itself.

As a group, take a few minutes to brainstorm all the different ways you can serve.

Offering:

The offering will now be received.

Offering Prayer:

Generous God, you have given so much to us, may we be generous. Help us to serve you with both our monetary offerings and the many gifts you have given to us. Let all that we do show your love for this world. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Closing Prayer:

Dear God,
For the gifts you have given to each of us, we give you thanks. May we use them generously.

We pray for our world. We pray for those who hate. May we love them. We pray for those who are hurting. May we serve them. We pray for those we don't understand. May we start to listen.

Be in our life. Help us to listen to your voice and be willing to act. Put others in our life who will love and serve us when we most need it.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Hymn:# 635 – Brother, sister let me serve you

Blessings:

Sisters, go out from today, ready to serve others. Show the love of our Heavenly Father. Be Christ in this world. And do it, knowing that God's Spirit is within you and surrounds you. Amen.

> "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?" ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

THANKSGIVING Worship

by Huda Kandalaft

Call to Worship:

Leader: Grace and peace to you from God our Father, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing that comes from heaven,

People: who knew us before the world began; who loves us so much that he calls us 'beloved children',

Leader: who has brought you from darkness into light, and filled you with God's glorious power; who has prepared an inheritance for you that will never spoil or fade.

People: who encourages and strengthens us in every good deed and word; who comforts us, in our times of troubles, so that we can comfort others.

Leader: This is our God, the One in whom we live, move, and have our being.

People: Let us give thanks to God for God's steadfast love endures forever.

Prayer of Approach and the Lord's prayer:

O God, we thank you and we come before you in praise and joyful singing
For you are our God and we belong to you.

In your Son Jesus Christ,
you richly bless us with all that we need:
bread from the earth, and the bread of heaven.

We thank you that you reveal yourself to us
in the bountiful creation around us,
in the midnight skies that sings of your glory,
in the midday sun that displays your holy handiwork;
each new day tells of your sufficient grace
and each night speaks of your divine mystery.
Yet, it is in the cross of Jesus our Lord that you reveal most profoundly your love story to us.
The talk of the cross sounds absurd to many,
but for those who follow your son, it is the power of God.

In this Thanksgiving season, we are reminded that we often forget to offer our thanks for the life you have given us. As we count our blessings, we pray Lord have mercy on us and grant us grateful hearts, so that we may live in gratitude and in thanksgiving. To you Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, to whom, and through whom, and by whom, we come now in prayer together saying:

> Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen!

Hymn: #433, All creatures of our God and King

Responsive Litany: (Based on number 118)

Leader: Give thanks to God for the Lord is good
People: for God's steadfast love endures forever.
Leader: For the beauty and wonder of your creation.
People: Thanks be to God, for God's steadfast love endures forever.
Leader: For our daily food and drink, and the nourishment of our spirit.
People: Thanks be to God, for God's steadfast love endures forever.
Leader: For minds to think, hearts to love, hands to serve, and feet to walk in peace.
People: Thanks be to God, for God's steadfast love endures forever.
Leader: For families, friends, and neighbours. For enemies, foes, and those who persecute the faithful.

People: Thanks be to God, for God's steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,

People: Thanks be to God, for God's steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: For the faithful, those who are gone before us, and the saints among us, who are patient in suffering and faithful in times of trial.

People: Thanks be to God, for God's steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: For all who work for truth, freedom, peace, and justice.

People: Thanks be to God, for God's steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: For the church, the body of Christ, revealing the image of Christ,

People: Thanks be to God, for God's steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: Above all, we give you thanks for the great gift, Christ Jesus our Lord;

People: To him be praise and glory, with you, Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Scripture reading:

Leviticus 13: 1-8, Luke 17: 11-19, Luke: 7: 36-50

Prayer of Illumination:

To you, O God, we come now with open hearts and minds to the work of your Holy Spirit. Illumine our minds to listen to your word and grant us wisdom and courage to understand and live by it with joy and thanksgiving. Through Jesus·Christ our Lord, we pray, Amen.

Reflection: Much Obliged

An old story is told about a man, who went to the priest of his village, complaining. He said: "Life is unbearable. There are nine of us living in one room. I can't take it anymore, what can I do?"

The priest answered, "Take your goat into the room with you."

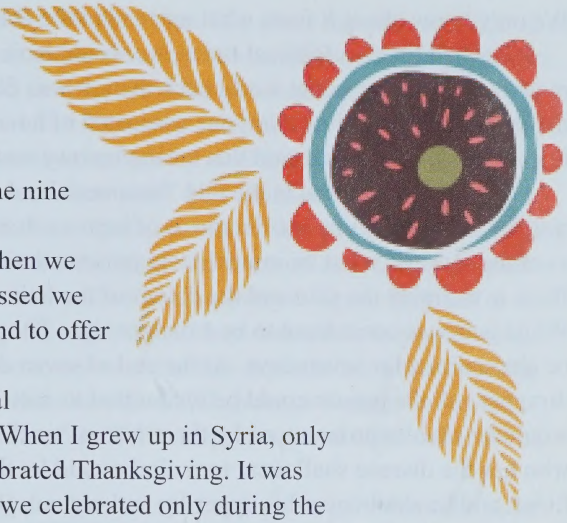
Looking at the priest with unbelief, the man said, "Are you serious?! There are already nine of us, and a goat too! No way!"

The priest said, "You came for help and I offered it. Do it and come back to me in one week."

A week later, the man came back looking rather hysterical; "We can't stand it anymore," he told the priest, "The goat is filthy, and the room smells awful. Our life is more miserable now."

So, the priest told him, "Okay, go home and let the goat out and come back to me in a week."

A radiant man turned out to the priest a week later exclaiming, “Life is good, life is beautiful. We enjoy every minute of it now that there’s no goat ... only the nine of us!”



Thanksgiving is a time when we pause to think about how blessed we are, to count our blessings, and to offer God our thanks and praise.

Thanksgiving is a national holiday peculiar to the west. When I grew up in Syria, only the Presbyterian Church celebrated Thanksgiving. It was a purely religious day which we celebrated only during the Sunday worship service. It had nothing to do with the meaning of the Western Thanksgiving national holiday. There was no turkey and, in fact, no food at all associated with it. It was a day put aside to give God thanks. Some Presbyterian congregations planned their pledging Sunday on Thanksgiving Sunday. The Eastern neighbouring churches did not celebrate Thanksgiving with us. However, my Eastern Antiochian Orthodox friends told me that they celebrate ‘thanksgiving’ every Sunday because to them thanksgiving is as old as Christianity itself. In fact, the Lord’s Supper, which is called in Greek ‘Eucharist’ literally means “Thanksgiving”. Thanksgiving indeed is at the heart of our Christian faith and doctrine.

People use many terms to express thanks in different languages, such as thank you (English), merci (French), gracias (Spanish), shukran (Arabic), and dank u (Dutch). ‘Much obliged’ is a term that is not used much these days. It is used to thank someone politely. It means that whatever was done is appreciated but it also means that the person who says ‘Much obliged’ now owes the other person a favour. In other words, the one who is much obliged is under an obligation to pay back. In the Christian sense, however, does God require our thanks? Does God ask us to pay back?

The scripture readings from Luke are about people who felt ‘much obliged’ to return the favour to Jesus. The first story is about ten lepers—a classic thanksgiving story about ten lepers who were healed of their leprosy. It is a tribute to modern medicine that most of us know very little about the disease called leprosy. Most of us have never seen someone who suffers from leprosy.

We only know about it from what we read in the Bible.

If we had lived in Biblical times, we would have known that leprosy was the most feared disease in the world back then. It was deadly and incurable. So much did the ancients fear it that anyone suspected of having the disease was banished from society. The rabbis said that curing leprosy was like raising the dead.

For all those reasons, in the Old Testament book of Leviticus, we find special instructions concerning the diagnosis of leprosy. It basically says that any skin swelling, or rash, must be immediately presented to the priest for inspection. He is to examine the skin and the colour of the hair within the infected area. White hair was considered to be a danger sign. The person thus inspected would be quarantined for seven days. At the end of seven days, if the infection had disappeared, the person could be readmitted to society. If not, then the person would be ritually pronounced by the priest as "unclean." "The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean'. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp." (Leviticus 13: 45–46)

What is important to know, however, is that in Bible times leprosy was not

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ARIGATO
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ASANTE
Toda
MAAKE
Ca'm on
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Jerejef

only considered as a punishment for one's sins, like other diseases, but also as an unexplainable act of God. This meant that there was nothing you did to deserve leprosy and nothing you could do to avoid it. People with leprosy were not only shunned from society, but also from their religious community. Not only declared unclean but also considered unworthy of God. They were considered outsiders. No one wanted to catch their pain, their loneliness, and their unspeakable fear. No clean insiders wanted to mix with those unclean outsiders.

The people with leprosy didn't challenge this because they could not work. They were dependant on the charity of others for everything, so they had to be obedient. They followed the rules and orders. They dressed as they were told, spoke as they were told, did not cross over the line that had been drawn on the ground to separate them from the clean ones. When Jesus came to town, they stood in their legally-defined distance of 200 steps away and cried out to Jesus, "Master, have mercy on us."

What Jesus did is that he gave them another order. He gave them the order to break the rules and cross the line. He said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." They followed the order obediently without questioning it. They simply obeyed

erima Kasih
THANKS
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MERCI
Mahalo
OBRIGATO
un Krab
GRAZIE
Asante

Jesus. They wanted to receive a diagnosis or a verdict from the priests: clean or unclean, insider or outsider. They did as they were told. They followed the rules.

But on the way, the ten were healed. The scabs went away, the skin colour was back, and feeling came back to their numb limbs. Nine went on to do as they were told, but the tenth, a Samaritan, did not. Upon discovering that he was healed, the tenth leper ran back to give thanks to Jesus. The Samaritan was a foreigner. In other words, he was a double outsider. According to the laws of those days, he was unclean by the virtue of his leprosy and an outsider by the virtue of being a non-Jew.

It is somehow strange that Jesus enquired about the nine others because he himself told them to go to the priests and they simply obeyed what he said. It is somehow strange because the Samaritan, in fact, did not obey and did not do what he was ordered to do. So, why was the obedience of the nine not praised?

And weren't all ten healed? Then how come this one was told his faith had made him well? Weren't all ten made well? This doesn't make sense!

The original Greek language of the New Testament helps here. Jesus said to the Samaritan man: "Your faith has 'delivered' you." The leper was not only healed from his skin disease, but also was delivered, or in other words, he was saved. He was not only declared clean and restored back to society. He was restored back to God. He was not only free to claim life back again, but free to give his life back to the giver of life.

The story in Luke 7 is very similar. It is a story about another 'double' outsider. She is a woman and a sinner; someone who brought an expensive ointment to anoint Jesus' feet. She washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. This woman had many sins and because her many sins were forgiven, she has expressed her love and thanks in this extravagant way. At the end of the story Jesus tells the Pharisee, "The one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." Jesus, using the same original Greek word used for the leper who is healed of leprosy, says to the woman, "your faith has delivered you."

So, does God require our thanks? Jesus was pleased with the thanks he received from the person with leprosy and the woman. In fact, the gospel of Luke made it clear that these outsiders were saved because they showed gratitude. They realized that they were "much obliged" and so they gave genuine and sincere thanks.

The ancient Arabs used to say, "I will willingly become a servant to the one who teaches me to read one letter." In other words, I give my life in gratitude to my teacher. The Masai tribe in East Africa have an unusual way of saying, Thank You. Translators tell us that when the Masai express thanks, they bow, put their foreheads on the ground, and say, "My head is in the dirt."

When members of another African tribe want to express gratitude, they sit for a long time in front of the hut of the person who did the favor, and literally say, "I sit on the ground before you." The Ancient Arabs and Africans understood very well what thanksgiving really means, and why it is difficult for us to express it. At its core, thanksgiving is an act of humility. "Much obliged" is more than words of gratitude—it is an attitude toward life itself. It is much more than thanksgiving, it is a thanks-living.

Today, I ask myself why I teach my young children to say the magical word, 'thank you." Am I teaching them thanks-giving or thanks-living? Why are we celebrating Thanksgiving? Are we practising thanks-living everyday or just occasionally? God does not ask for our thanks, but God appreciates our thanks. In thanksgiving we find our salvation. In gratitude, we find life.

I want my kids to give thanks but much more I want them to live a life of gratitude because when we give thanks to God we humble ourselves and confess who God is and understand who we are and what God has done to redeem us. We are "much obliged" to our God who has delivered us from darkness to light. We are "much obliged" when we look at the cross for God has given us everything, even his only son. Such love is so amazing that it demands our love, our life, our all.

So, this thanksgiving when we lift up our hearts to the Lord in prayer, may we remember why it is right to give God our thanks and praise, and may we find, in our thanksgiving, salvation and life. Amen.

Prayer:

Now we give our thanks and praise to the one who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, according to God's power that is at work within us. To God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Hymn: # 338, Let all things now living

Offering Invitation:

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it. Let us return to God the gifts of the earth and the offering of our lives.

Offertory Prayer:

You open your hands and satisfy every living being, O God.
Bless these gifts, we pray,
so that our gifts, humble as they are,
may glorify your name,
and bring forth a fruitful harvest for your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession:

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Lift us your hearts,
People: We lift them up to the Lord
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
People: It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

Leader:
We give you thanks, O God, for all things you made.
For the world, for things great and small, beautiful and surprising;
for things seen and unseen, understood and mysterious.

We give you thanks for the wonder of earth and sea and sky,
for the beauty of nature and wildlife,; for the rhythm of the days and season.

We give you thanks for waters that refresh and bring about life,
for the earth that is fertile and rich,
for those who tend and care for harvests and nature.

We give you thanks for days and the strength to work,
for the gifts and talents you have given us,
for challenges met, and for moments of leisure and rest.

We give you thanks for human life,
for talking, laughing, and thinking together,
for burdens and joys shared,
for relationships that give life meaning.

We give you thanks for our circle of family and friends,
for children and their curiosity and joy,
for the insight and wisdom that comes with the passage of time,
and for memories we cherish.

We give you thanks for your care and your grace in times of anxiety, doubt and grief,
for healing in times of illness, confusion, and distress,
for rejuvenating strength and vision in times of renewal.

We give you thanks for the knowledge that you hear each prayer and know each need,
that you love and care for each soul and body,
and that you walk with us in all our days and seasons.

We are grateful for all that, and above all for the unconditional love of your son Jesus Christ, we are much obliged and give you our thanks and praise, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Hymn: #663, God whose giving knows no ending

Blessing:

As we go now in peace to love and serve the lord, may we pour ourselves with extravagant love and lavish thanks-living when we see and meet the body of Christ still broken in this world. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. Amen!

STUDY:
Mission as a Sign of Hope for Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples

by Paul McLean

Opening Prayer:

Praise God! (Psalm 68:35)
Pipahmek kamo to Kawas! (in 'Amis)
Asa kamu tu pissusling matumashing mas Tamadaza! (in Bunun)
Kunumi makanaelre drengedrengera ki Twaumase! (in Ngudradrekai)
Uljamun azemnger a semnai nua CEMAS! (in Paiwan)
senayu pulihu na Viruwa i itras! (in Pinuyumayan)
Trahu squ Utux Kayal! (in Tayal)
temula tohpʉngʉ to hamo! (in Tsou)

We praise you, O God, for all your good works among the indigenous peoples of Taiwan. Open our eyes that we may see ways you are leading your Church in mission today. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture Readings:

Read: Matthew 28:18–20; Luke 4:18–19; John 10:10b; Acts 1:8; Revelation 5:11–14

What do these passages teach us about God's mission in the world and our role in that mission?

Reflection:

Mission as a Sign of Hope for Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples

During my first of four month-long visits to Taiwan in 2019 on a warm 25°C Sunday in February, after worship at the Ngudradrekai Presbytery's "Church of the Rock" in Pingtung City, I picked up a copy of *Taiwan Church News*, the weekly newspaper of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT). A feature article inspired me to learn and pray more for our indigenous brothers and sisters who worship God every Sunday in a dozen different indigenous languages in over 500 indigenous churches—40% of the PCT.

The article was in Mandarin-Chinese characters, the dominant written language used in Taiwan. But it focused on the minority "first nations"—the aboriginal or indigenous peoples, 3% of the total population—who have lived on the beautiful island for thousands of years. The article was composed by the Indigenous Mission Committee (IMC) of the PCT's General Assembly and entitled, "Mission as a Sign of Hope for Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples." Apart from personal comments, much of what I share below is taken from this Annual Report to the more than 1200 congregations in the PCT. I hope we partners in Canada, will also be moved to pray and support God's indigenous mission work in Taiwan.

The IMC and indigenous congregations strongly affirm the PCT's *Confession of Faith* (1985), which prays God will help the Church be a dynamic "sign of hope" for all the inhabitants of Taiwan. In response to God's call upon indigenous congregations, the IMC works closely and collaboratively with the 11 indigenous presbyteries and four indigenous districts (not yet large enough to form a presbytery) to enact six major mission initiatives locally and with indigenous peoples globally: proclaim the Gospel, nurture God's children, serve with love, transform society, care for God's creation, and engage Gospel and culture.

Indigenous churches have their own unique languages, cultures, traditional wisdom, and customary ways of doing things. Their diverse gifts for mission enable them to bear witness to God's diversity in creation throughout Taiwan. Since the rapid shift to industrialization in the 1970s, many indigenous peoples have migrated from their traditional homeland in the mountains to large cities, so that today over half of Taiwan's indigenous population live in urban contexts. In response to Jesus' Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, the PCT has planted urban indigenous churches, which are active in urban mission work, evangelism, Christian witness and outreach, even to non-indigenous peoples.

One reason the Church exists is mission, not only preaching Christ inside church buildings but sharing the unchanging Gospel of his love in new ways with a needy world. In order to accomplish its mission objectives, the IMC supports indigenous churches in three main areas: evangelism, Church & Society, and education.

1. *Evangelistic Mission in Indigenous Villages and Cities*

The IMC helps equip indigenous presbyteries and districts each with a general secretary and program staff who can use all the resources in the PCT's presbytery-based organization to serve together in God's life-giving Kingdom mission. For example, the Paiwan Presbytery office which I visited when translating the Paiwan Bible is a meeting place for regular prayer and planning. The presbytery's general secretary, the Rev. Ljegean, and her program staff help implement the presbytery's 10-year mission plan in relation to: seniors, children, women, youth, men, church development, community service, social media, plus initiatives shared with General Assembly committees like urban mission and the "One-leads-One New Doubling Mission Movement."

The PCT is deeply committed to translating the Bible into all of Taiwan's indigenous languages so the Good News can take root in each locale. By means of their own languages and cultures, each indigenous group can know God's truth, share the love of Jesus, and put faith into action in ways that fit their context. In 2017, after 30 years of dedicated translation work, the complete Ngudradrekai Bible was published in the majority Vedai dialect. For the past two years, the Ngudradrekai Presbytery has conducted a literacy program where their 19 churches have been writing out the whole Bible by hand, often with grandparents, parents, and grand/children reading out loud and writing together. In March 2019, work began translating portions of the Bible into three smaller Ngudradrekai dialects—the Word of God for all people in their own mother tongue.

The IMC provides financial support to pastors of village churches to supplement their living expenses, so they can keep working fulltime in their local congregations. I think of a coworker, the Rev. Talum, a Bunun pastor who serves Jesus Christ faithfully in a remote Bunun congregation in the high southern mountains. When he and his young family first arrived, church members were too poor to pay his minimum stipend. Talum and his wife were willing to sacrifice for the sake of sharing the Gospel in the village. Supplements from the IMC and the local presbytery helped the congregation over some hurdles to the point where they can now support their beloved minister. Recently, the congregation gave sacrificially to help pay for Talum's wife's brain surgery, a moving testimony of a congregation's love for their pastor and his family.

Indigenous presbyteries are planting indigenous churches in cities where people have migrated in search of jobs and better education for their children. These churches are an oasis for families living away from their traditional lands, a place where they can still hear and speak their own indigenous language and share their culture together. Urban indigenous churches often produce gifted young leaders who can in turn find ways to help the village church "back home." They can also work with non-indigenous urban churches in shared mission projects to advance the goals of the PCT's "One-leads-One."

The IMC recently began an evangelistic ministry called "Mission to the South" which is anindigenous mission with other indigenous peoples outside Taiwan. In 2016, the PCT signed a partnership agreement with the Borneo Evangelical Mission. Two indigenous PCT missionaries now work with the Iban Conference of the Methodist Church in Sarawak. The IMC has also arranged exchanges with Maori churches in New Zealand, and is exploring ways to partner with them in evangelistic work and theological education. Indigenous cross-cultural mission is growing globally.

2. *Climbing Mountains & Going Down to the Sea—All Encompassing Indigenous Church & Society Mission*

"Indigenous Church & Society Mission" is a major emphasis of the IMC, no matter how complicated it can be. This involves indigenous peoples' human rights, economic development, grassroots mission, concern for indigenous social issues, visits to and conversations with the national government, political strategies, and much more. The IMC describes it as "climbing mountains and going down to the sea," mission work that encompasses every aspect of indigenous life.

The IMC supports village churches in down-to-earth economic development which cares for the land and those who live on it. This agricultural mission also helps younger families stay in their villages and live a fulfilling life. Villages are gaining fame for their agricultural products: millet, quinoa, bitter tea oil, Inca oil, mountain lettuce, fruits, and other foodstuffs. Through education and training, the IMC helps churches and community organizations develop co-ops where they plan and grow suitable agricultural products, work for fair prices, and develop ways to market them for the good of all. A book entitled *Stories of PCT Indigenous Peoples' Agricultural Development Work* testifies to God's blessings through agricultural mission over many years.

Few villages have a middle school or high school, which means children must leave their indigenous environment to complete their studies in the dominant Han culture. The IMC encourages the government to implement the *Indigenous Peoples' Education Law* so that elementary and high school history courses will treat indigenous peoples as subjects, not objects, and help them take ownership of their own history. More funding and teaching of indigenous languages is needed too.

The IMC advocates revising laws in regard to long-term care for the elderly, which fit with indigenous ways and contexts. My Tayal coworker, the Rev. Hetay, says around 250 of the 700 indigenous villages in Taiwan have care centres for seniors. Most of these are run through village churches like his own, which offers daily drop-in programs. Seniors come to church for Bible study, exercise, hear guest experts teach about health and well-being, or take interest courses offered through the PCT's island-wide Seniors University.

Believing in the sovereignty and righteousness of God should be realized in every facet of life, the IMC analyses legislation proposed by Taiwan's National Legislative Yuan, which affects indigenous peoples, then provides relevant action strategies for local churches and community organizations. The IMC monitors the *Indigenous Peoples' Self-government Law*, the *Indigenous Peoples' Basic Law*, plus laws concerning the establishment, protection, and utilization of indigenous peoples' traditional lands, policies on indigenous culture and language, rules for the election of indigenous peoples at all government levels, regulations affecting indigenous church lands, and more. The IMC helps small working groups research, plan, and implement specific mission strategies in response to all these social concerns. The IMC calls on the government to follow the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) in Taiwan. The IMC strongly opposes the use of Build–Operate–Transfer (BOT) methods proposed in the Indigenous Land Act.

The IMC assists grassroots organization and networking to meet local needs. They connect local churches and community groups with related indigenous groups throughout the nation. They train and support grassroots indigenous leaders through programs and online study courses, such as Urban and Rural Mission (URM), Third Person Neutral (TPN) conflict resolution, and Open Space Technology (OST). Goals are to build greater capacity for local autonomy and self-determination and to strengthen the indigenous self-governing movement, as well as promote restorative justice in Taiwan society. For example, the IMC monitors and is working to rectify injustices in the way the national government has drawn maps to define traditional lands. Indigenous peoples claim their traditional lands cover 1.8 million hectares, in most of the central mountain ranges, while the government says indigenous lands amount to only 0.8 million hectares.

As another example of restorative justice, recently the remote Bunun church in Dung-pu (where my friend and coworker, the Rev. Alang has retired), helped a family in the village relocate the bones of a family member who had suffered during the martial law or "White Terror" era in Taiwan's history (1949–1987) to provide the family with some closure to their grief.

The IMC helps indigenous and non-indigenous politicians and government officials in charge of indigenous peoples' affairs to understand issues from an indigenous perspective and act cooperatively on their behalf. Several indigenous PCT ministers are active members of the Presidential Office's *Committee on Indigenous Peoples' Historical and Restorative Justice* as they strive for truth and reconciliation in Taiwan. As one indigenous leader has said:

Without fact finding, no truth,
Without truth, no justice,
Without justice, no forgiveness,
Without forgiveness, no reconciliation.

The IMC and indigenous churches participate in anti-nuclear demonstrations and oppose the dumping of nuclear waste especially on Orchid Island the traditional land of the Tao people. The IMC promotes the formation of peoples' assemblies to protect indigenous land rights and care for creation; for example, to rectify harmful practices by the Asia Cement Company on traditional Truku land in the Hualien region.

The IMC also guides government agencies and local churches in using indigenous methods for disaster relief and relocation projects after floods or earthquakes have damaged indigenous villages.

3. *Educational Mission*

Education and research are supported by the IMC over a wide range of issues. It conducts surveys on the state of pastoral leadership in indigenous churches and the state of faith among young people. It organizes indigenous pastors and not-yet-ordained evangelists to promote and support "Mission to the South." It joins with the PCT's indigenous

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
Luke 4:18–19

seminary, Yu-shan Theological Seminary, to provide educational events at indigenous student centres in various cities.

Other kinds of indigenous educational work include: training and scholarships for college students; supporting college students so they can attend global conferences and activities—like the PCC's Canada Youth events and exchanges; and working with presbytery and district youth committees to nurture global leaders for the future, run faith and life camps (with topics on Gospel and culture, worship, one's devotional life, etc.) and conduct inter-presbytery athletic tournaments (basketball, volleyball, ping-pong, archery, etc.), for high school and college students.

The IMC supports training for urban and rural indigenous churches, pastors, elders and deacons, church workers and school teachers, so people in both urban and rural contexts can help the other grow, so the Good News of God's Kingdom can become a blessing for urban and rural churches alike.

The IMC helps write and promote teaching resources related to the Gospel and indigenous culture; for example, multilingual liturgical resources for indigenous churches and mother language Sunday school materials. The IMC cooperates with each indigenous presbytery and district (for example, 'Amis, Bunun, Paiwan, Tayal, etc.) to publish children's songs and stories in each people's own language with Han translations as an aid. The IMC coordinates with the PCT's Youth Committee and Mother Language Committee to encourage indigenous youth to write and publish Christian songs for a new generation. It also coordinates with the PCT's One-leads-One Committee and the Mother Language Committee to translate and produce Gospel literature for each indigenous presbytery and district in their own language. The IMC sponsors two ongoing series called: *Wise Sayings of Taiwan Indigenous Peoples and Taiwan Indigenous Mission Stories*.

The IMC also helps build PCT relationships with international partner churches like the PCC. It encourages the building of partner relationships between presbyteries, like the Bunun Presbytery and the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington. It supports the Sediq District and Truku Presbytery in partner relationships with presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK). It promotes resources and participation in global programs like the Council for World Mission's *Hearing God's Cry* and the World Council of Churches' *Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*. This is helping PCT indigenous churches become more outward looking so they can support and participate in God's mission among other Austronesian peoples too.

The IMC invites indigenous and non-indigenous churches in Taiwan and partners overseas to pray and care for all of the above mission activities. The IMC's total budget for 2019 is around CDN$960,000 (NT$22,816,000).

May God continue to bless the mission work of PCT indigenous churches so they can share their love, joy, energy, and vibrant faith in Jesus Christ with others, and be a sign of hope which points people to the one true living God.

Reflection Questions

1. What inspires you about what God is doing through the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan's Indigenous Mission Committee (IMC), indigenous presbyteries, and local churches?
2. How could you translate and reapply something similar in your synodical, presbyterial, or local church?
3. In what ways do you feel God wants to broaden or deepen your participation in more holistic mission where you live so that you and your church can be a "sign of hope" for others?

For Further Study

You can read blogs about my work with indigenous Bible translation teams at:

- http://pccweb.ca/missionblog/the-rev-dr-paul-mclean/
- http://english.pct.org.tw/ is the English gateway to information from the PCT about its life and mission.
- https://tcnn.org.tw/en/ takes you to the English version of the PCT's Taiwan Church News Network.

A Closing Prayer

Gracious God, again we praise you for what you are doing in the lives of our indigenous sisters and brothers in Taiwan. May your kingdom come and your will be done in and among them. Through their example of faith in Jesus Christ, their joyful love for you, and the many ways they participate in your mission, continue to make them a sign of hope which points us and all people to Jesus Christ, the source of abundant life. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The PCC supports the Rev. Dr. Paul McLean as he serves as a Bible translation advisor to The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and The Bible Society of Taiwan.

The History and Culture o

A special thank you to Louise Gamble for preparing this for Glad Tidings. *Louise Gamble has been working with our partner church, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan since 2006 (previously 1965–1973 and 2001–2004).*

She transcribes and translates reports and correspondence of the Canadian Presbyterian North Formosa (Taiwan) Mission. The documents Louise is working with are records of the development of the Christian Church in North Formosa from the point of view of its missionaries. The documents cover the life of the first Canadian missionary to Taiwan, the Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay.

History

Out of the mists of time come the many faces of the original peoples of Taiwan. They vary in culture, language, and skills. Until the 1600s they were unknown to the outside world. Perhaps the first contacts with the outside world were made by migrants from Fu-jian Province of China. At first those incomers worked together with the peoples, but before long these immigrants expanded their territories and pushed back the peoples from their lands. There were constant waves of immigration from China. In addition, Taiwan has been colonized by the Spanish (1626–1642), the Dutch (1624–1662), Ming Dynasty under its loyalist Koxinga (1662–1683), the Ching Dynasty (1663–1895), the Japanese (1895–1945), and the Republic of China (1945 to the present). The result is that today the indigenous population has been reduced to 2% of the total population, pushed into remote mountainous areas, enduring constant disrespect, poorer education, and poor or limited economic opportunities.

Recent research suggests the ancestors of Taiwan's indigenous peoples have been living on the island for approximately 5,500 years. They are Austronesian peoples, with linguistic and genetic ties to other Austronesian people including groups from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei. Their languages are of unique historical significance since most historical linguists consider Taiwan to be the original homeland of the Austronesian language family.

The earliest written record of the peoples of Taiwan classified all the peoples as savages or barbarians. They were called either "ripe savages" or "raw savages." At that time, all peoples without the "benefit" of the history of Chinese culture were considered savage. Those who were under the suzerain of China were "ripe savages" which required them to pay taxes, observe Chinese customs, worship Chinese gods, and wear Chinese style clothing. They in

aiwan’s Indigenous Peoples

by Louise Gamble

turn were offered protection of the Chinese state such as was available in ungoverned Taiwan. These tribes lived throughout the flatlands of Taiwan and were called “Po-po-huan” or “Plains Barbarians.”[1] Those other groups that had been pushed further into the mountains were called “raw savages” (“unsubdued” or “wild savages”), “mountain brothers,” or “head hunters.” Such derogatory terms have persisted into modern times.

The present-day government has recognized certain groups as indigenous peoples (2005). These refer to the traditional peoples who have inhibited in Taiwan and are subject to the state’s jurisdiction, including Amis tribe, Atayal tribe, Paiwan tribe, Bunun tribe, Puyuma tribe, Rukai tribe, Tsou tribe, Saisiyat tribe, Yami tribe, Tsao tribe, Kavalan tribe, Taroko tribe and any other tribes who regard themselves as indigenous peoples and have obtained the approval of the government’s Central Indigenous Authority upon application. Some distinguishing traditional characteristics have been: the Amis tribe for its matriarchal leadership; the Tayal tribe for its distinctive facial tattoos; the Bunan tribe who living in widely dispersed communities developed a custom of communicating with one another by musical cries.

All the high mountaineers have traditionally engaged in hunting, fishing and agriculture, and headhunting. Some sources have suggested that headhunting originated with the “raw” savages as they lashed out in rage against the Chinese who took away their lands pushing them further into the high mountains. There were also many shamanic practices that were incorporated into the headhunting custom. Chinese, and later on Japanese, governments worked to stamp out these practices. There had been tensions between Chinese immigrants and indigenous people from the beginning; these tensions often broke out into actual rebellion. In 1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan. The Japanese policy toward the people was very severe, accelerating even more fighting. Indigenous territory was encircled by electric fences. Peace came slowly and with great price. The last warrior resistance was at Wushe between the Sediq and the Japanese in 1930.[2] Over 1214 Sediq lost their lives before the conflict was settled.

Present day

1. *Indigenous peoples as an exotic curiosity*

I attended an event that included many indigenous people as well as many others. During the installation of new leadership, the indigenous men gathered together and dressed in ceremonial clothing, surrounded the incoming Han leaders during the ceremony. As the dancers began dancing, and encircling the leaders, to invoke blessings upon them in their new leadership, those persons moved aside out of the circle, thus transforming the entire blessing into an exhibition or entertainment. This is an illustration of how often indigenous cultural values and expressions are turned into curious, exotic, and peculiar spectacles. People are encouraged to open their tribal villages to tourists, to dance and sing for them, thus reinforcing a condescending patronizing attitude. Although such tourism is intended to achieve the goal of more economic self-reliance and cultural preservation, its very promotion reinforces very old stereotypes.

2. *Language Challenges*

Taiwan is a land that is linguistically very complicated. The overview might go like this: when under the control of the Ching Dynasty, everyone was supposed to speak Chinese (Fu-jian dialect) but this was rarely enforced. From 1895–1945 under the control of Japan, all were compelled to speak and read Japanese. Thus, most peoples learned Japanese as well as their own languages whether Taiwanese, Hakka, or indigenous languages. All education and business were done in Japanese. Then in 1945, the retreating armies of Nationalist China took over Taiwan. Immediately everyone was punished for speaking their own languages (again) and were compelled now to speak only Mandarin Chinese. Again, all education and business were conducted in Chinese.

One can readily understand that confusion and resentment arose. Now over seventy years later, Mandarin has in fact become the general language of communication. However, there is a strong desire among most people, both indigenous and Taiwanese speakers, to preserve their mother language. One friend related that "how can we be truly ourselves when we have lost our own language."

Since the advent of democracy, the government is committed to implementing the Indigenous Languages Development Act and protecting the nation's linguistic diversity. Tribes with governmental recognition may choose to study their own language. This is great for those schools in the actual tribal area, but all too often for economic reasons, families re-locate from their original villages into urban settings. Language classes are provided in urban schools too, but often this effort is not sufficient to maintain a strong grasp of the language, given that most communication is done in Mandarin Chinese.

3. *Nuclear Waste Storage*

On the south east coast of Taiwan there is a small island called

Orchid Island. The people there call themselves the "Tao." During the Japanese era (1895–1945) they were protected from any outside influences, maintaining their "stone-age" lifestyle and customs. Living by the sea, fishing has been their mainstay.

Given its relative isolation, this off-shore island was chosen as the site for waste storage from Taiwan's three operating nuclear power plants. Construction was completed in 1982. It is said it was due to language barriers the Tao people were not aware of it being a nuclear storage facility. Workers told the islanders that they were building a food cannery to help them. Another idea that was circulated was that they were building an entertainment park. When the Tao people finally learned the danger in their midst, they began a protest that has lasted over 20 years. Reports have indicated the incidences of cancer have increased. Radiation levels have caused mutated fish. All waste was promised to have been removed by 2016.

This affair has thrust Taiwan into the limelight of environmental colonization. Misuse and misappropriation of traditional indigenous lands are rife across the island.

4. *Christianity and Indigenous peoples*

Christianity (both Protestant and Catholic) has affected tribal life in a momentous way. Although mission work was carried out on the plains areas from 1865 resulting in the establishment of a native Church among the Taiwanese and the plains indigenous peoples, little contact was made with the high mountain tribes. By the end of WWII, extreme suffering under the severe Japanese rule, and the breakdown of individual tribal values, scores upon scores of villages of the so-called savages accepted the freedom Christianity offered.

When did the gospel first penetrate the mountain ranges? This is impossible to know. Two Tyal girls from mid-west Taiwan studied at the Girls' School in Tamsui, graduating in 1916, returning to their home villages as baptized Christians. Perhaps the most famous person was Chi-wang of the Sediq tribe. After losing her husband and all earthly goods, a Taiwanese pastor comforted her with God's word. She believed and was baptized. Rev. James Dickson, missionary from the Canadian Presbyterian Church brought her to Tamsui for training. But she was impatient with book learning, and so returned to her own tribe. Initially she told of God's love from her home. More and more people came to hear—sometimes up to 30 people would come. Teaching would go on through the night. But such large gatherings alerted the attention of the Japanese police. Eventually she had to hide. Carriers would bring her from village to village as she told a simple gospel message. One listener was admonished to not tell anyone until he understood more, but he did not obey and through his words brought 25 others into faith. This microcosm of spreading the gospel was repeated in countless high mountain villages. After the war and the Japanese left, believers came down from their mountain villages to plains churches to seek baptism. One Hualien Church alone baptized 500 Sediq folk.

This movement which some have termed a 'mass conversion' was more complex than most Westerners realized. Most tribes had lost their main foci: their villages were transplanted away from their ancestral lands, their resistance to colonization was defeated. Their hunting fields were diminished; their desire to be headhunters was gone. Their ancient taboos lost their value. Their tribal moral center collapsed leaving them grasping for a new revitalizing force that would enable them to meet the future positively. The gospel message became that new center. Instead of headhunting, they decided to make peace and live within a Christian community.

The task ahead was tremendous. Basic teaching needed to be given, but there were no Scriptures available. Japanese Bibles were honoured, but not understood. Chinese was not a known language. Canadian missionary Rev. Clare McGill came to Taiwan purposefully to translate the Bible into the Tayal language. John Whitehorn of the English Presbyterian Mission translated the Paiwan language. Many others endeavoured to get the Bible into the hands of the people. Rev. James Dickson and his wife Lillian, Presbyterian missionaries, were extremely active in assisting this new and exciting Christian movement. Many Taiwanese pastors set up Bible and leadership training conferences. Very slowly these efforts paid off, as more and more excellent leaders arose to give direction to their own people in their own languages. Yushan Theological College trains young men and women to be both spiritual and practical leaders in their home communities.

Thus the Church has become an organizing force drawing the tribes together and becoming the glue that would give them the power to be leaders in the coming struggles with intruding influences of community dislocation, alcoholism, and familial problems that come from societal breakdown.

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[1] See George Leslie MacKay's "From Far Formosa", chapter 23 titled "Mission Work Among the Pe-po-hoan". Most the indigenous peoples he met were "ripe savages".

[2] In 2011, a movie was produced in Taiwan called "Warriors of the Rainbow" or "Seediq Bale" based on this 1930 Wushe Incident, and was received with critical acclaim.

Former Taiwan Missionaries Gather

Crieff Hills Retreat Centre was the location of the retreat for nine former Presbyterian missionaries to Taiwan in mid-July. For many years the group had met at the Garvin Cottage on Bird Lake in Muskoka, but following the death of Murray Garvin, there have been several years when the retreat has not happened. However, meeting at Crieff found us feeling that there had been no gap at all in the years between. We are family!

It was a wonderful time of reminiscing, catching up, talking about our kids, and remembering those who were either not able to attend or are no longer with us. There were great discussions of current issues related to Taiwan and aging! Louise Gamble and Paul McLean continue to serve in Taiwan.

We missed Marie Wilson (New York), Marilyn Ellis, and Paul McLean, who were absent from our time.

eft to Right: Louise Gamble, Florabell (Betty) Geddes, MaryBeth McLean, Mary Helen Garvin, Diane Petrie) Osborn, Susan Samuel, Joy Randall. Back Row: Terry Samuel.

In the Society

Photo: Camp Kintail's Cake by the Lake 20

Synodical

Southwestern Ontario Synodical members and friends were entertained at Camp Kintail's Cake by the Lake 2019 by its Co-Executive Directors, Theresa and Johnathon, and staff on July 4.

As we gathered, several staff guided guests in small groups through a tour of the camp grounds. The camp has grown and improved greatly since the Ladies Camp June Weekend that many WMS members enjoyed for years!

Camp Kintail is known internationally as several staff from other countries were introduced following the delicious lunch served by this year's enthusiastic staff. Getting to know these young people as they were interspersed at tables around the dining hall was such a joy.

Following lunch, two young musicians on bag pipes piped us down to the Chapel, which is surrounded by trees but still has a view of Lake Huron. This area was a cool and peaceful setting as we worshiped together on this very warm day!

The Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee welcomed everyone, and the staff led the congregation in a medley of camp songs. Then, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris gave an inspiring sermon on the Andrew Option.

As we made our way back to our vehicles, members were seen greeting their WMS friends and hugging their goodbyes, as we all commented on what a wonderful day it had been. For many auxiliaries in the area, Camp Kintail is their pride and joy as they have given support to the building projects and funded many campers.

Our thanks go to the Rev. Theresa MacDonald-Lee and Johnathon Lee

CAMP KINTAIL

Photo: Camp Kintail's Cake by the Lake 2019

for their commitment and guidance over the past 12 years. May God continue to bless you and your staff throughout this 2019 camping year.

Presbyterial

The **Brockville** Presbyterial met for its Spring Rally on May 28 at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Winchester with the theme, Sharing God's Gift of Love. On a wet Spring day, over 25 WMS members and guests enjoyed coffee, tea, and muffins, and had a chance to socialize prior to the meeting.

President Janet Jones welcomed the attendees in her opening remarks. Worship was led by the Kemptville group, and Ann Langabeer from Winchester provided the music.

The business portion of the meeting followed with review of minutes, correspondence, and reports from the executive. Janet also spoke about projects taking place in the Presbyterial, including collecting stories about women from the area who were missionaries, either in Canada or around the world; these stories needed to be recorded before they are forgotten. This is especially true for women missionaries, who often did not marry and have children, which is how memories of women are historically recorded.

The theme for the next three Presbyterial meetings is Sharing God's Gifts, and today's focus was Sharing God's Gift of Love. The Rev. Bruce Kemp, minister at St. Paul's, shared his experiences working with a local Rotary Club to build a new elementary school in the southern part of Ecuador in 2010. Bruce was part of a Rotary Club in Edmonton at the time.

The previous school had no source of heat, which was a concern because the temperatures in the mountains (at an altitude of 2500 m) averaged about 8 degrees C. The children walk 1–2 hours each way to school. Stones and cinderblocks for the new school had to be carried up by hand or on horseback, and all the work was done by hand. Even the students would stay after school to help. The local military also aided with the construction.

Four buildings were built—two classrooms, a kitchen, and washroom facilities. The kitchen was especially important because the children came from poor families and their school lunch was often their only meal of the day. Washrooms were necessary as well to encourage proper hygiene, which included showers that the families could use. The Rotary Club also provided school uniforms, which were required, but which families could not afford.

Bruce also shared how he worked with the Rotary Club in a different part of Ecuador to help install "sanitation units" next to homes, consisting of a toilet, shower, and sink. These sanitation units significantly improved hygiene, as water was frequently contaminated by runoff from local farm fields. Bruce talked about his motivation to get involved, which sprang from his desire to serve others in a "hands-on" way.

After a delicious lunch provided by the St. Paul's Presbyterian Women, the Rev. Bruce Kemp and Ann Langabeer led everyone in a rousing hymn sing on guitar and piano. This was then followed by a game of Bible Front Page Challenge, where everyone was asked to guess a particular biblical character based on dramatic readings by selected individuals. Great fun and merriment was had by all!

Members of the Presbyterial from Brockville gave the courtesies at the conclusion of the meeting, and after the

Remembering

Louise Landreth
Margaret Hislop
Knox Presbyterian
Women Harrington
Embro ON

Eileen Wiegand
St. Andrew's WMS
Kitchener ON

Evelyn Snelling
St. Andrew's
Trenton ON

Janet Muirhead
Knox Agincourt
Scarborough ON

Shirley Crawford
St. James Presbyterian
Church
Stouffville ON

blessing, everyone went out singing, Will you come and follow me.

Barrie Presbyterial's annual meeting was held on May 29 at Stroud Presbyterian Church. President Janice Terry welcomed all and opened the meeting with prayer. The Stroud WMS group president, Joan Jay, welcomed us on behalf of the church and the group.

Betty Grant presented the devotions on Love (John 3:16). She read a Julia Bettencourt blog, Finding Something Beautiful, comparing love, a mark of a Christian, to cleaning up a thrift store treasure (sanding, fixing, painting, etc.). Jill Prady then led a memorial service for five WMS members. The year-end reports were given and approved and then Sarah Kim spoke about the upcoming Women's Gathering to be held on May 15–18, 2020 in Richmond Hill. She then installed the officers.

After a salad and cake lunch, Sarah recounted her trip to Tumekutana 2018 in Johannesburg. The theme was, Women, You are the Image of God from Genesis 1:27. A video was shown of the 22 countries arriving with dancing and singing. Issues of equality in the church and society, empowerment, self-esteem, and encouragement were discussed. The "Listeners" (African women clergy and laity and international partners) observed and heard the issues and incorporated them into the Testament which ended with a call to action.

The ladies also visited the Apartheid museum and Nelson Mandela's home. A plaque shows Nelson Mandela as an honorary citizen of Toronto. The museum has two entrances, one white, one non-white, so you do experience racial discrimination. On the cultural night, each country performed songs and dances related to their country.

The Rev. Peter Ruddell ended the meeting with the Benediction.

National Presbyterian Women's Gathering

Through the Waters

DATE: May 15–18, 2020

PLACE: Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Richmond Hill, Ontario

REGISTRATION FEES: **$395** before November 30, 2019
$475 after November 30, 2019 and before March 31, 2020

INQUIRIES: womensgathering@presbyterian.ca
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Glad Tidings

November/December 2019

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by Marianne Emig Carr

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Glad Tidings
November/December 2019
Volume 95, No. 6
EDITOR: Colleen Wood
DESIGN: Alexis McKeown

Published six times a year by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Member of the Canadian Church Press.

Funded by the Government of Canada | Canada

Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

2019 subscription rate $20.00 plus applicable taxes: $21 for AB, BC, SK; $22.60 for ON, MB; $23 for QC, NB, NF, NS, PEI. WMS members are asked to send subscriptions through their group *Glad Tidings* Secretary. Individual subscribers may order direct from *Glad Tidings*. Please make all cheques and money orders payable at par to *Glad Tidings*.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the circulation department at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7. Phone 416-441-1111; 800-619-7301.
E-mail gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. ISSN: 00170720.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada for our publishing activities.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 2:8–11 NRSV

I think that there is a lot of fear in our world today. There are the big worries of climate change, violence, economic security, terrorism, disease, and natural disaster. There are also the smaller worries about personal finances, job security, retirement planning, and family situations. And many of us struggles with very personal fear about being loved, living up to expectations, and the fear of what tomorrow might bring.

It is not surprising we feel fear. Politicians use fear to get elected. Marketers use fear as well. If you have acne, you won't have friends. Buy a new car, to get the latest safety features. Buy these new decorations to ensure a perfect Christmas. The media provides worrying health advice that seems to change every day! Even at work, school, and church settings we know that there is fear because of bullying behaviours.

Fear was also common at the time of Christ's birth. God's people were afraid God had forgotten about them as they lived in fear of their occupiers. I expect the shepherds were often in a state of fear. They were outcasts. They were out at night protecting their sheep from predators. The site of the angels terrified them. Yet, God turned their fear into celebration. They celebrated at the birth of the Christ child and shared the news.

This message is just as important for us today. Jesus is stronger than our fears. Because of Jesus, we know we are loved unconditionally. We have forgiveness from our past wrongs, if we only accept it. We can experience peace even when the world around us is in turmoil. It doesn't mean our life situation is transformed, but we are transformed as our fear turns to joy. In a world of fear, love wins.

This Christmas, may you know the love of God and find peace and joy through the birth of the Christ child.

A Different Kind of Joy — a Chaplain's Perspective

by Trish Archibald

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:10–11

A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.
Proverbs 17:22

My favourite Christmas song these days is an odd one: "Joy" by Tracey Thorn.[1] It's beautiful, but not terribly cheery, and for a hospital chaplain like me, the song sure hits close to home. It recognizes fear and pain and yet, still manages to kindle joy in some dark places.

The lyrics speak to those of us for whom Christmas is not always shining and bright, but remains a season which can still offer us comfort and joy:

When someone very dear
Calls you with the words
"everything's all clear"
That's what you want to hear
But you know it might be different in the New Year
That's why, that's why we hang the lights so high
Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy,
You loved it as a kid, and now you need it more than you ever did

It's because of the dark; we see the beauty in the spark
That's why, that's why the carols make you cry
Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy

This lovely song says it honestly: Fear gets in the way of our joy a great deal.

Fear of what might happen. Fear of the unknown. Fear that even happiness cannot last as we wait for the other shoe to drop. Fear about things going on in the world that we can't understand, let alone control.

That's why we need to turn our hearts to joy, to choose joy over fear. The announcing angels said it loud and clear: *Forget your fear! Focus on joy, instead! Jesus has come, and that is God's sign to you that you don't have to be afraid anymore.*

Does that mean bad things won't happen, or don't matter? No, that's not it at all. In fact, as we got older, we lose many of our illusions. We learned that life is not always kind or fair or just. It can be pain-filled and ugly, in fact. That stops many of us from ever trusting joy again.

Life has lost its shine, so to speak. And to loosely quote John Steinbeck: *it never feels so dark as immediately after a bright light goes out.*

We have all met people who have been stuck there in the gloom. They don't expect joy in their lives. They anticipate bad news and are oddly, somehow satisfied when it finally comes. Many of those folks are not very fond of Christmas. The lights, the excitement, the shopping, the carols, the…*joy*. It rubs them the wrong way, they are realists, after all. Why go through the pretense that there can be peace when there is war, or joy when there is cancer? What do the announcing angels have to say about that?

The shepherds were afraid—even this good news terrified them at first. But they heard the message loud and clear—Trust Joy.

And so must we—starting with Christmas. The old song says, "Love came down at Christmas," but you could also say *hope* came down or *joy* came down to us at Christmas when Jesus came into the world.

Tracey Thorn sings, "*You loved it as a kid... now you need it more than you ever did.*" You know how hard life can be. You know how life can turn on a dime and things can change forever. That's why you need to dig deep and remember Christmas joy and hang onto it all year round. Maybe that makes you think of Scrooge as he proclaims, "I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year"!

Lighting a Christmas candle in the dark can be an act of resistance, an act of bravery. It will signal to the universe, that for as long as you draw breath you will align yourself with the baby who came to bring light to the world. You will be a light-bearer for others lost in the dark. Darkness and death will not overcome you.

That shift in intention—from fearfulness (and crankiness) to joyfulness—can do more than just make us happier people. As a chaplain, I know that choosing joy can make the most remarkable difference in spiritual and physical health and healing. We have long heard it said that laughter is the best medicine, and I have seen countless times that, with God's help, a determination to look for joy will carry a person through the most trying of times. Even to their last breath.

Working with the dying has shown me there is a tremendous difference between being *cured* and being *well*. The medical world places almost all its emphasis on a cure. You are sick or you are cured. If you are not cured, they have failed. However, and this is

pretty marvelous, I know that you can still be *dying* and yet be *entirely well* when you have joy and laughter and peace in your heart.

A crushed spirit makes healing almost impossible, but choosing joy brings life. Choosing the joy of the Lord is more than just a decision to look on the bright side. It's declaring that if we live we belong to Christ, or if we die we belong to Christ, so it doesn't matter what happens; we know to whom we belong and that brings peace. (Romans 14:8)

The darkness is still out there, but suddenly we remember we are not alone and we don't have to be afraid. In fact, *it's because of the dark we see beauty in the spark.* Many things that might have ordinarily escaped our attention before entering the darkness are now cherished as gifts to our hearts. A kind word or gesture. A small victory for independence. Faith to endure.

We have seen the darkness and we know that through Jesus it's been overcome. As Tracey Thorn reminds us, *That's why the carols make you cry.* They're songs from out of the dark into the light.

When we have traveled a dark road, we know especially well that the real power of Christmas is not the presents, the tree, or the turkey. It is its ability to instill in our hearts peace, hope, love, and above all, joy even when times are hard. Especially when times are hard.

Choose joy. Don't be afraid. Jesus has been born for you.

Rev. Trish Archibald is a bi-vocational minister of St. Andrew's-Knox Presbyterian in Fort Erie, ON and hospital chaplain at Niagara Health with a desire to be a light-bearer for some and a willingness to sit in the dark with others if that company is what they need.

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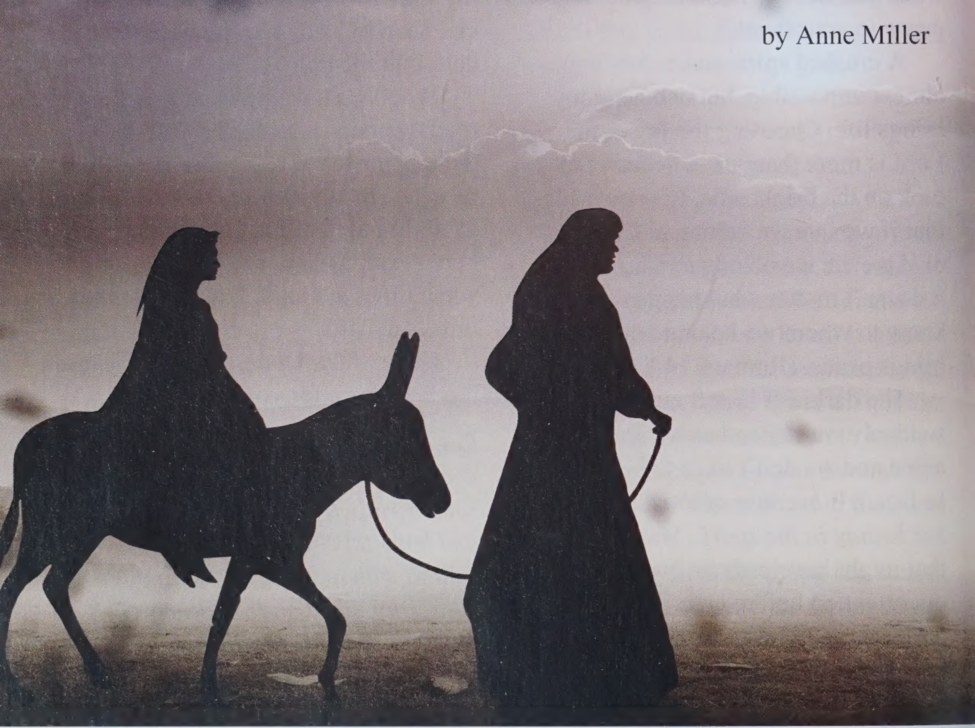
[1] Find it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=maRckqODJnA.

Pregnant with Purpose

by Anne Miller



During Advent last year, I heard a hauntingly beautiful song performed at a concert. It moved me so much that I looked it up online as soon as I got home. It's called "Almost There" and was written by Michael W. Smith and Wes King. You can hear it sung by Amy Grant and Michael online with the lyrics as a Powerpoint (https://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=1EEJFMNU) or with images from the movie The Nativity (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6MXZ0V7deU).

The song is about Mary as she makes her way to Bethlehem, very pregnant with baby Jesus. It speaks of her innocence, her ability to believe the angel's message, and her willing heart. She is to pray for strength and to "Trust the Father to provide / Bread of heaven prophesied." Over and over, she is reassured that she's almost there, "Where death will die and life begins / The answered prayer, Emmanuel."

There is power in these words directed towards a teenaged mom-to-be who is perhaps becoming more anxious with each mile to Bethlehem. I can imagine her fiancé Joseph (who was likely at least a few years older) saying some of this to her as he walks by her side and tries to be reassuring. And he does this as he is preparing to become the father to a child not his own but the very Son of God.

The obedience, selflessness, and commitment of these two relative nobodies to play a huge part in God's rescue plan for the world is incredible. And protecting and then birthing a baby was just the beginning of what would be asked of them. They had to trust God deeply. They had to trust each other quickly and be a team. Their relationship to this point had been complicated to say the least, and the trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem would have been long and gruelling. Mary perhaps asked many times if they were almost there as she felt the birth pangs starting.

As I listened to the song again, it occurred to me that we aren't merely recipients of the result of their faithful obedience—the incredible gift of Jesus' birth and then his death and resurrection three decades later. We are all called to be Mary (and Joseph) as well. We each carry within us something God-given that the world desperately needs. We are all pregnant with the possibility of what our loving God can do through us for the sake of others.

We may feel that we have made many long treks in our lives so far. We may be weary from the miles that have been put on us. We may resent that the terrain can seem different and more challenging each trip. We may be tired of carrying whatever gift we have been given and the expectations that come along with them. We may wish that someone else would carry it the rest of the way for us.

We may feel that we have made many long treks in our lives so far.

As individuals we can feel this way, especially in the busy lead-up to Christmas. Congregations and church organizations and groups can feel this way. The journey can be long, hard, and lonely, and maybe sometimes we would love to just sit down and be finished with it. We can be impatient about arriving at our destination.

It can become easy to forget some important things when life feels overwhelming, and suffering is all around us and the earth itself is crying out in pain. We can forget that Emmanuel, God with us, is no less a reality for us as at that first Christmas. We can forget that Christ's burden really is light and that he walks with us and gives us rest along the way if we will just stop for a while and be still in his presence.

We can forget that the people we hang in there to love and serve— the unruly teen, the new mom, the recent widow, the weary or frazzled church staff member, that starving child an ocean away—may see us as an answer to prayer. We can forget that because Christ lives in us, we are a conduit for the life he brings. We can forget, because we've walked with him so long and can take the blessings of knowing him for granted, that others don't realize what they are missing.

We are still part of God's unfolding plan. We all have a role to play in the redemption of creation as the birth pangs of the end times get louder and louder. Like Mary, we need to keep trusting in what God is doing and showing us. We need to pay attention and to pray for strength to continue to bring God's love into the world. Some of us may move more slowly and carefully than we used to, but we can still transform lives and situations by allowing Jesus' grace and light to spill out of us.

The Advent and Christmas

season provides rich opportunities for us to notice those in need of the Messiah's compassion and healing. We get to once again welcome Emmanuel, God with us, as part of our being and offer him to the world. The gifts that you offer this Christmas may include life itself, whether they involve words of encouragement or prayer, delivering food or toys to those in poverty, sharing the nativity story, buying presents from Gifts for Change that benefit those across the globe, providing hospitality to someone in need, or something else that brings hope, peace, joy, and love into challenging circumstances.

May we be willing to embrace whatever gifts God asks us to carry and offer to the world. May we continue to trust in God's ability to provide rest and care and to sustain us. May we be open and ready for Emmanuel to inspire us once again. And may we believe that death will die, and life will begin all because of the faithfulness of two average people who knew how much the world needed Jesus.

Anne has served the church for over 20 years in a variety of capacities with children, youth, and families. She is a lay worship leader, workshop and event facilitator, and published writer of curriculum, articles, and other resources.

May we be willing to embrace whatever gifts God asks us to carry and offer to the world.

Life in Our Hands

by Heather Paton

The popular BBC television series *Call the Midwife* is an entertaining look into the lives of a group of nurse midwives working in poverty-stricken East London, England in the 1950s. Each episode tells a story of a patient who comes into the care of these midwives—teens forced into prostitution, babies at risk because of a rare disease, families dealing with the harsh economic realities and coming through great trials together. Sometimes there is a happy ending, often there is not. It may not be the most scientifically accurate portrayal of the inner workings of midwifery, but the sentiments of the characters give great insight into a mainstay of the profession that remains unchanged. Namely, that midwifery is about bringing life into the world.

With this definition of midwifery, it is no wonder that the Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1:15–20 refused to grant the king's unruly request to kill all the male babies they helped to deliver. As the story goes, the unnamed king was getting worried that the Hebrew people were going to take over. Though they were the enslaved ones, he felt threatened by their numbers and strength, worried that if a war ever erupted they would fight against him. Like those before and after him, he did everything in his power to ensure his stability as king. Yet the midwives, Shiprah and Puah, remained true to their faith and their work. With courage, they worked their way around his murderous request, respectfully fudging the facts as they were called to account. They risked their lives by disobeying the king, and God blessed them for it.

In this act of civil disobedience, Shiprah and Puah are said to have been some of the first players in the Exodus movement. They helped bring those babies into the world and protected them. Those babies would be the peers of Moses. They would grow up in slavery and walk into freedom with their families under his leadership. Had those midwives, and others like them, not risked their lives for God's will, that generation, maybe even the entire nation, would have been lost. There would have been no one to move into the promised land. God gave Shiprah and Puah the strength they needed to have courage in the face of evil. God used their unique position to allow for life to grow and abound not just in the moment, but in the long run too. For God knew what it was like to bring life into the world and how hard it could be to maintain it.

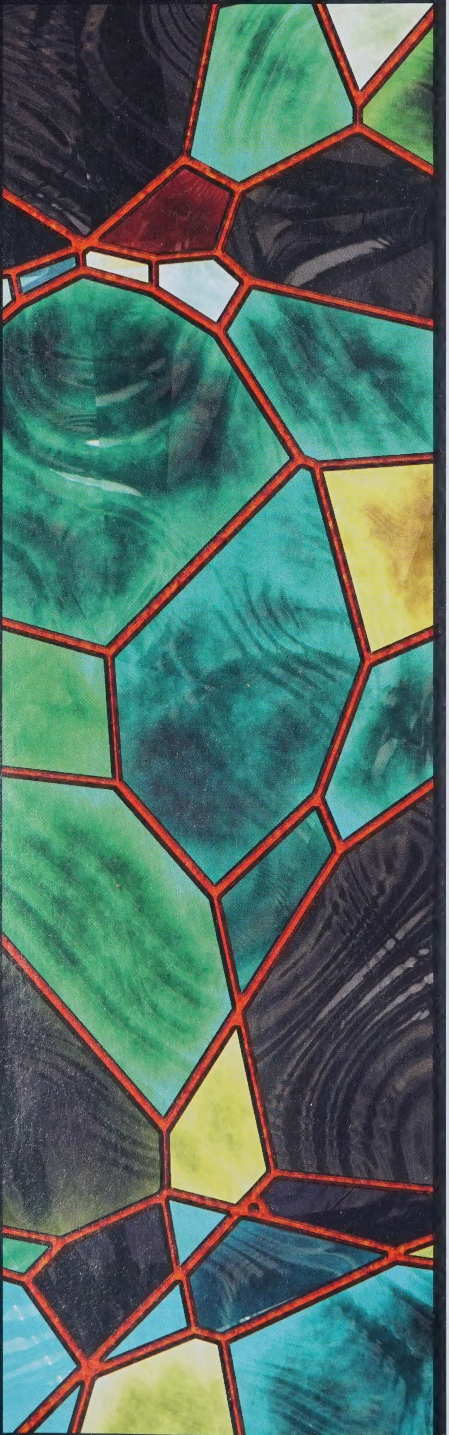
There's not a lot of stories about midwives in the Bible, but this one goes to show the power the role has—assisting in birth and holding new life in their hands. The role of a minister has often been compared to that of a midwife—one who coaches and walks alongside the church in their work of bringing Christ into the world. The minister as midwife is an image about a relationship of trust and empowerment as the gift of faith grows and takes shape in a congregation.

My experience with midwives is that they are educators, wanting parents to be well informed to make their best decisions for themselves and their babies. They are professionally trained to walk you through each phase of pregnancy by offering their wisdom and alternatives. They need to be given the utmost trust as they come into our lives at the most vulnerable time, and are with us in the most intimate, messy, and miraculous experience of giving birth. My current midwives have a good balance of gentleness and force that I'm sure will help get me to push when I need to push and convincingly reassure me, in a panic, that things will be okay.

In the life-giving experience of the church, these aspects are all important. A minister is a teacher and nurturer, inspiring strength and perseverance when people are weary. They deal with people in their most vulnerable and most miraculous moments and they do it best when they are given the trust to do so. It is a relationship that only works when both parties work together, listening to and understanding each other. The work of the church is a labour of love, but it can be messy and painful, and requires great patience and courage.

As we work alongside our ministers this Advent season, I hope we will be encouraged to do the hard work of the church that needs to be done. It is not always easy in these days of great uncertainty and transition. But together we get the courage, like Shiprah and Puah, and work towards bearing the life that God has for us. That life involves sharing Christ with the world.

Though it's not mentioned in the Bible, I imagine there must have been a midwife in the stable with Mary and Joseph on that first Christmas night. I imagine she coached Mary through a lot more fear, pain, and chaos than is ever portrayed in the carols and cards of today. At the end there was a precious little bundle of life, a life that no one expected would be shared with the entire world. That life is now in our hands, to be celebrated and shared, no matter how challenging. May we do so joyfully this Christmas, and always.



Light!

by Colleen Wood

It's Monday—my day off—my cleaning and grocery day. Yet, this Monday I am easily distracted. It's a beautiful Fall day and the dog and I have already enjoyed some time sitting in the front window reading together. Okay, I was reading and she kept nuzzling me for attention. I'm back to the cleaning now, energized by my morning coffee.

But so quickly I again get distracted by the light that is streaming in through my window. It has caught the beautiful stained-glass window that my husband and I received as a wedding gift. I can't help but stop and enjoy the inspiration of this light.

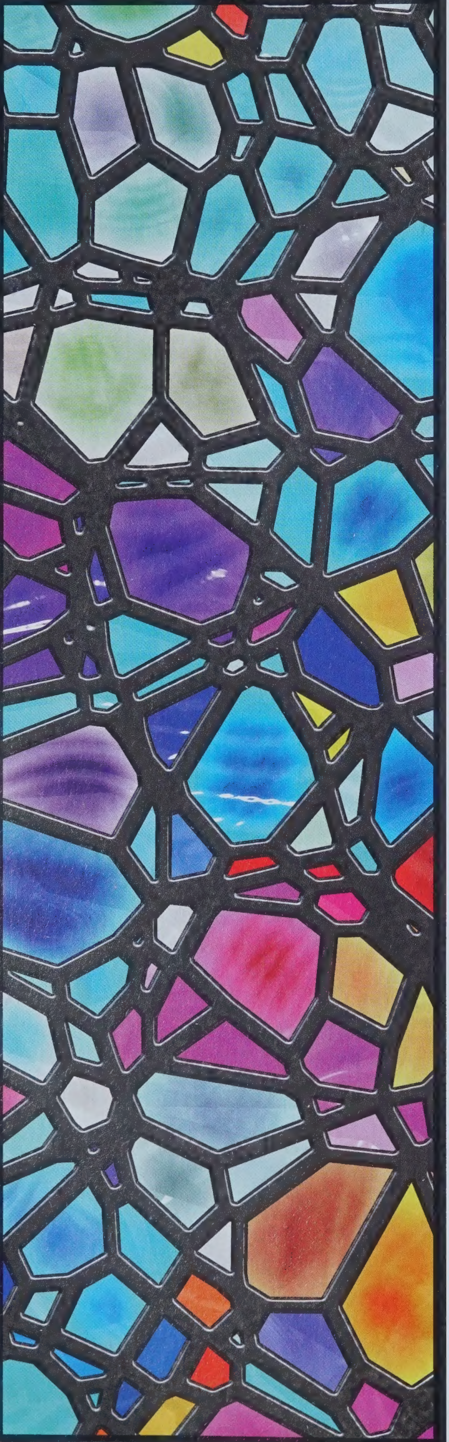
As I gaze into the light and the colours, I immediately think of Jesus as the light of the world, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12, NRSV)

I have always been attracted to light…the light of a flickering candle, a firefly in the night sky, a campfire providing warmth and light, the stars in the sky, the sunlight streaming through a window, an early morning sunrise. These lights bring me joy. They lift my spirits. And some days, I need that. Somedays, I need to just stop and focus on the light.

I need to take that time to know that light is still present in this world. Each day, as I read or listen to the news, I hear stories of darkness. Women are being oppressed around the world. Children are starving or being trafficked. Individuals are dying in demonstrations. Wars are raging. World leaders are lying or not standing up for the marginalized. The world is warming up, and countless plants and animals are becoming extinct. Mental illness is affecting people at alarming rates. So much darkness.

Just as light warms and comforts me, remembering that Jesus is present in this mess of a world we live in, comforts me. Jesus knows this mess. Jesus lived on this earth and experienced its darkness. When Jesus spoke of being light in this world, it was around the time of the Feast of the Tabernacle. During this feast, four huge torches would have been lit as a graphic symbol that the Lord was with the people of Israel in the wilderness. When Jesus declares himself light, he was claiming to be God. And today, God is still with us in the wilderness, shining light.

This light also leads me out



into the world. The light of Jesus is shining through us into the world. Sometimes, I do not feel very bright. Sometimes I feel like I live in the darkness and contribute to it. But, that is my weakness—not Jesus within me. I need to let the light of Jesus shine brightly through me.

As I strengthen my relationship with the light giver, I am better able to let my good works shine. As Christians, we must work to overcome the darkness around us. We are called to speak out for the oppressed. We are called to serve the poor. We are called to live as stewards of God's creation. We must only trust and obey the light giver.

During this season of Christmas we will be faced with dark nights, but these nights will be illuminated with the lights of the season. As you see these lights, consider how you are sharing Christ's lights this season. Are you giving generously of your time? Are you considering your impact on the earth? Are you telling others the good news of the true light? Are you thinking about, praying for, and speaking out for others during these cold and dark nights?

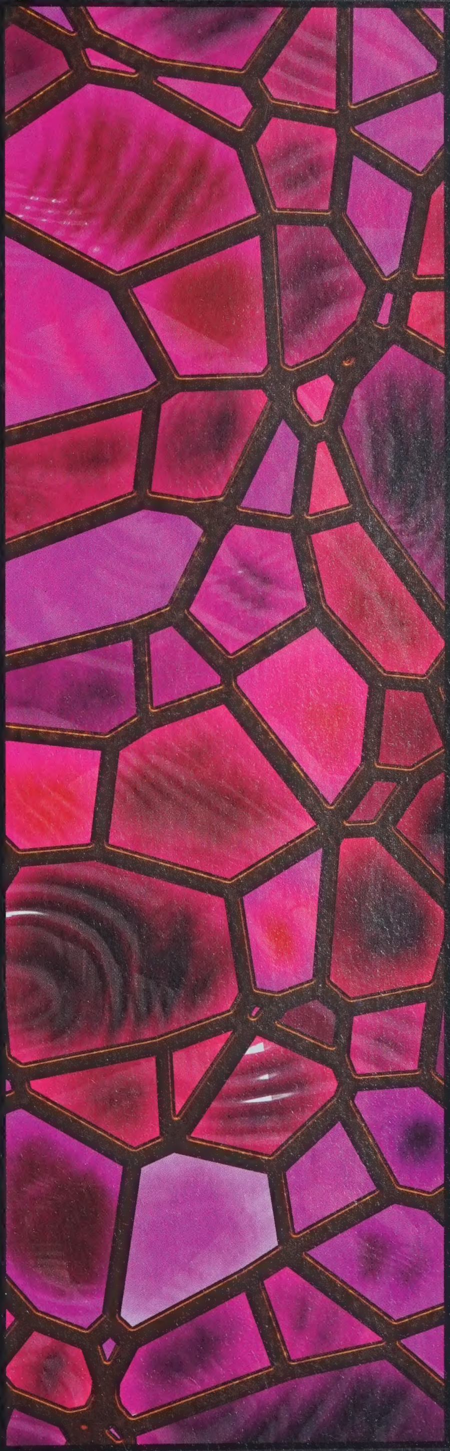
As you consider being light this season, read this prayer by John Henry Cardinal Newman, and consider making it your prayer as you shine light on those around you.

Dear Jesus, help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go.
Flood my soul with Your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly,
That my life may only be a radiance of Yours.

Shine through me, and be so in me
That every soul I come in contact with
May feel Your presence in my soul.
Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus!

Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as You shine,
So to shine as to be a light to others;
The light, O Jesus will be all from You; none of it will be mine;
It will be you, shining on others through me.

Let me thus praise You the way You love best, by shining on those around me.
Let me preach You without preaching, not by words but by my example,
By the catching force of the sympathetic influence of what I do,
The evident fullness of the love my heart bears to You.
Amen.
(John Henry Cardinal Newman)



Unpacked

by Audrey Cameron

The 3rd Sunday of Advent has just passed and I am reminded of a conversation I had last year.

I was leading worship and with that responsibility, had the pleasure of sharing in conversation with the children. I love this part of any service and in this particular congregation, I look forward to it. This congregation has more children than adults on most given Sundays defying the trends of rural Atlantic Canada with families remaining for work and then, wonderfully, coming to worship.

I had carefully taken my silver letters J, O,Y that are part of my decor and was preparing to share about Joy, and how I always remember the lesson of my childhood to put Jesus first, others second and myself (Yourself) last. David, my five-year-old friend, and faithful helper of children’s time was primed before worship to hold the letters for me. He agreed. Unfortunately, as nature would have it, children’s time and nature’s call occurred at the same time. David went to the washroom and I shared my story. (Which was fun and interactive and everything I hoped it would be, except I missed my helper.)

Worship was over. I placed my notes, my water, and JOY back in my bag. I was ready to leave.

“Audrey, where is the JOY?’ David came running to ask.

I opened my bag and showed him the letters sitting carefully in my bag, protected so I could take them home in one piece.

“What? You packed JOY up already?”

I was amused by his chastisement. And his scolding has not left me since. I packed JOY up already!

Since that day, it seems like the call to joy is everywhere. My colleague often speaks of things ‘sparking joy’, or not, depending on the moment. Facebook is filled with joy givers and joy takers. Wedding, funerals, marches, protests, school lessons and grocery store advertisements all speak of joy, joy moments, joy makers and joy takers. And the challenge to joy is everywhere, too. Racism, narcissism, hatred, unrest…there is much that can cause us to lose heart. But my joy comes from what I shared that day with the children. It comes when I put my heart firmly and certainly in the heart of Jesus, when I embrace my personal assignment to love others and I trust that, in my love and service, I, too, am firmly held and cared for by the One who loves me first .

David was appalled with me for packing up the JOY.

He was right.

Reprinted from our Women’s Gathering blogs, November 2017.

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Residential Schools

Memorial Register:
As of September 30, 2019, the names of 2,800 children known to have died or never returned home from residential schools have been made public by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. According to the NCTR, the number of children identified by name, as well as unnamed in death records, is about 4,200.

Pastoral Letter from the Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly,
The Rev. Amanda Currie
September 30, 2019

Residential school Survivors and families, and all who walk a path of reconciliation,

This morning, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation released the first list of the known names of children who died and went missing at residential schools during a ceremony at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec.

It is difficult to express the depth of sorrow that losing a child causes a family. Even speaking of healing in this context is painful, for how can one heal from such a loss? For some Survivors, families and communities, the release of these names will be a step towards closure, yet some may also struggle with reopened wounds. Many still seek answers about what happened to their loved ones. There are more names yet to be found and much work lies ahead to gather the names and stories of these lost children, and to honour their lives. For all who mourn the children named, and those who have yet to be named, I share in your mourning. We carry the weight of knowing our church was involved in running these schools and taking these children. I pray for the Creator's healing presence and comforting Spirit to be with all who mourn, and to guide our church in living out the Confession of the harm we caused by operating residential schools and our commitment to a journey of reconciliation.

Today is a day to bear pain in solidarity and to witness to the lives of the thousands of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children who never returned home from residential schools. As a denomination, we have committed to walk with Indigenous people towards healing and wholeness. Part of this journey to healing involves confronting the intergenerational cost of the residential school system on

Indigenous communities. The release of the Missing Children Register is an invitation to remember and honour the children who attended the schools; those who survived, and those who did not. In this time of hearing difficult truth, I encourage all Presbyterians to pray together. Pray for the children, their families and their communities. With the knowledge that healing is still needed, I also encourage all of us to reflect on how we can contribute to furthering a path of healing and reconciliation.

May God help us all to walk gently and with compassion.

In peace,
The Rev. Amanda Currie

Prayer of Lament for Children Who Died or Never Returned Home from Indian Residential Schools

Creator God of love and justice,
Comforter of those who mourn,

We turn to you acknowledging the actions of your church, our complicity in running residential schools and taking children from their families. We have asked forgiveness and committed to work for healing and reconciliation. But we recognize that for some, that change came too late.

We have just seen the first list of the names of students who died or never made it home from residential schools. We know the list is incomplete; that there will be more names and that some names may never be known. But you know, Loving and Healing God, their names and their stories.

For those children whose names we now know, those we do not yet know and for the intergenerational harm still present today that grew from their absence, we ask for forgiveness and pray for healing for those whose children, siblings, family and friends were taken from home but did not return.

For where there was joy, and we took it;
laughter and we stifled it
play and we turned it to tears
family and we broke it

We repent and renew our commitment to walk a new path. We honour the children lost and hold the memory of their lives in our hearts.

Comforting God, we pray for healing in the communities and families of all who experienced residential schools, and strength for all who pursue reconciliation. Amen.

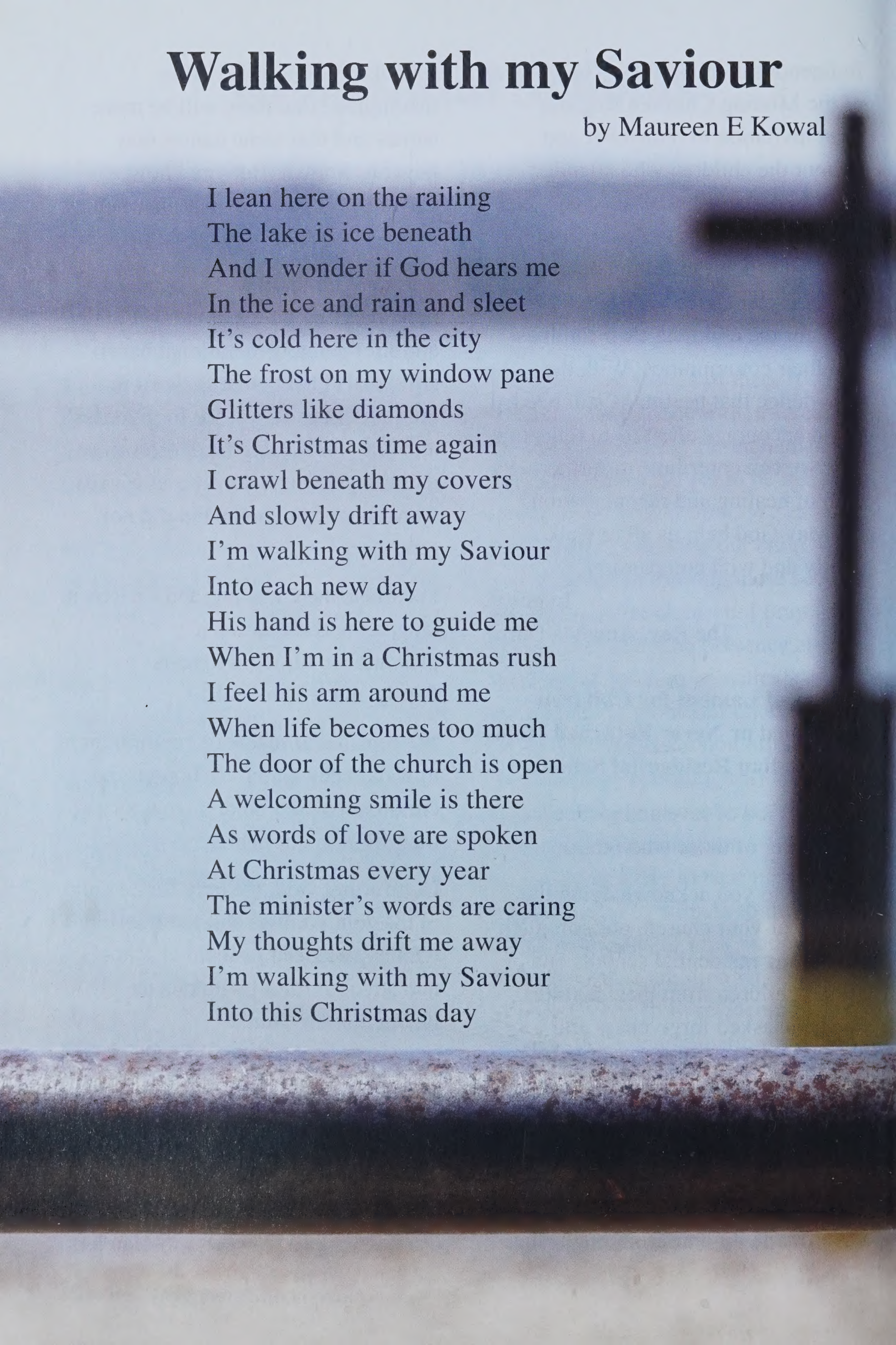
Justice Ministries, The
Presbyterian Church in Canada

(Reprinted from The Presbyterian Church in Canada website: https://presbyterian.ca/2019/10/01/pastoral-prayer-indian-residential-school/)

Walking with my Saviour

by Maureen E Kowal

I lean here on the railing
The lake is ice beneath
And I wonder if God hears me
In the ice and rain and sleet
It's cold here in the city
The frost on my window pane
Glitters like diamonds
It's Christmas time again
I crawl beneath my covers
And slowly drift away
I'm walking with my Saviour
Into each new day
His hand is here to guide me
When I'm in a Christmas rush
I feel his arm around me
When life becomes too much
The door of the church is open
A welcoming smile is there
As words of love are spoken
At Christmas every year
The minister's words are caring
My thoughts drift me away
I'm walking with my Saviour
Into this Christmas day



Advent Worship Service:

Songs of Resistance and Hope

by Rev. Marianne Emig Carr, First Presbyterian Church, Brockville, ON

Call to Worship:

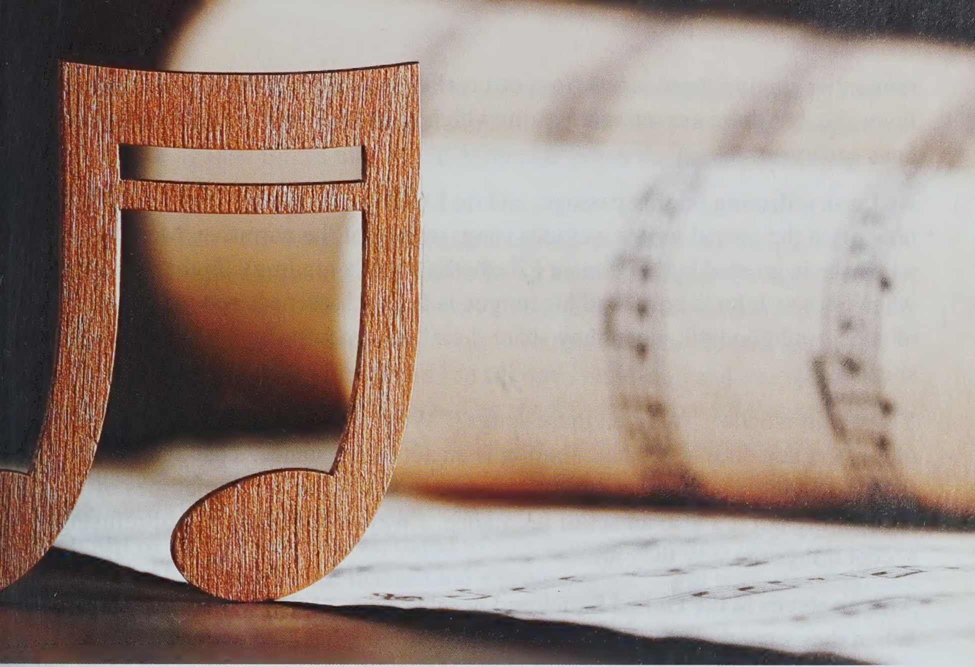
ONE: Our souls magnify the Lord,
ALL: And our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour.
ONE: For God has looked with favour upon us, and called us blessed,
ALL: God is with us; God remembers the promises made to our ancestors,
ONE: We sing to God, knowing that God will bring about justice for all.
ALL: God is entering our world and our lives again in a new way.

Hymn #123: My soul gives glory to my God

Prayer of Adoration and Confession:

O God of Elizabeth and Mary, you visited your servants with news of the world's redemption in the coming of the Saviour. Make our hearts leap with joy, and fill our mouths with songs of praise, that we may announce glad tidings of peace, lift up the humble and the poor, and welcome the Christ in our midst.

But at the same time, we confess, O God, that we have not heeded Mary's song to do justice and extend mercy to others, as you have extended mercy to us. We confess, O God, that the words of Mary are challenging, even



frightening. When we ponder them, we confess that at times we are the proud, the powerful, and the rich, and are unwilling to reach out to the poor and hungry. May we live into your ways of justice, even when it is hard, and heed the song of Mary this Advent and Christmas. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon:

God passes the gift of mercy down from generation to generation, always loving, always forgiving, always calling us to new life. We are able to live secure in your hope and learn to do your will, as we receive your compassion and welcome Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, into our hearts and into our lives. Amen.

Scripture Readings:

Luke 1: 39-55

Hymn #124: People in darkness

Reflection:

The Advent and Christmas seasons are among my favourites in the liturgical year for many reasons, but one of the chief ones is all the wonderful hymns and carols. I think this is true for most of us who remember singing these songs from our earliest years! I was trying to decide on a favourite, but there are too many from which to choose, and I keep hearing new ones each year.

As I was reflecting on this passage, and on Luke 1–2 in general, I was struck at how often the gospel writer includes songs as part of the narrative. Mary sings when she is greeted by her cousin Elizabeth (today's reading). Zechariah sings when his son John is born, and his tongue is finally loosened, and the angels sing of peace and goodwill when they share their "good news of great joy" with the shepherds.

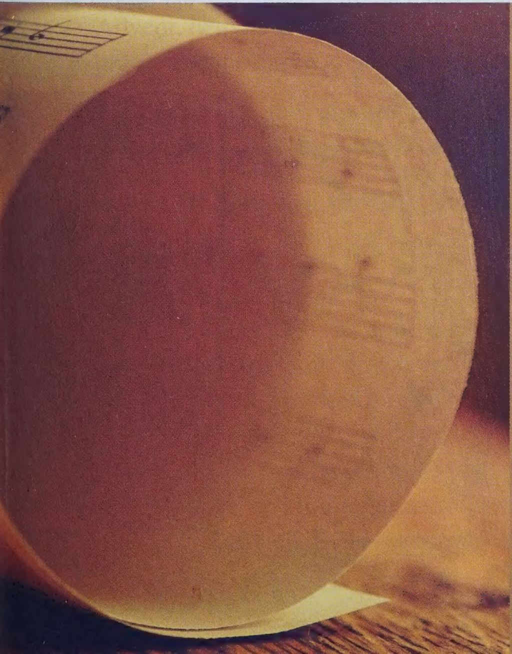
You might wonder, "Why all these songs?" Well, there are many reasons, but one of the key ones is because singing is an act of resistance. That's not to say that all singing is, of course. Sometimes it's an act of joy and sometimes of community but it's also an act of resistance, a way of speaking out, of refusing to accept things the way they are.

African slaves in the United States and in other parts of the world knew this. When they sang their spirituals, they were both praising God and protesting against the masters who enslaved them but couldn't keep them out of the promise of deliverance of the Bible. And the leaders of the American civil rights movement knew this too, singing songs like, "We Shall Overcome" in opposition to the power structures that kept (and still keep) them from being fully included

in society. These songs were songs of resistance, songs of hope, and songs of confidence in the promises of God. Human history is filled with such songs of resistance against forces that would otherwise crush the human spirit and continue to subjugate the powerless.

The songs in Luke are songs of resistance because of who was singing them. While some might consider Zechariah to be an authority figure (being a priest in the Temple), he was still a Jew, part of a people under the tyranny of the Roman Empire. Elizabeth and Mary were even more powerless as women in a patriarchal society, one elderly and (up till now, childless) and one, barely a teenager and pregnant out of wedlock. The shepherds to whom the angels sang on Christmas night were the "lowest of the low," considered ritually unclean and unfit to enter the Temple because of their work and their social status. But the angels sang to them as people "on whom God's favour rests." These people, in the midst of their powerlessness, dared to sing against the rulers of the day, dared to hope and have confidence that in God's promises the world was changing, and that there would be justice and shalom for all.

The days are growing shorter and darker, and very often our spirits are "darkened" too, caught between the pressures of the season, the anxiety raised by the news headlines, and the falsely cheery "Christmas songs" we hear everywhere. Reading and recalling these resistance songs of long ago and



These people, in the midst of their powerlessness, dared to sing against the rulers of the day, dared to hope and have confidence that in God's promises the world was changing, and that there would be justice and shalom for all.

singing the hymns of Advent and Christmas combine the realism of our world with the promise of Christ in whom "the hungry are filled with good things," and the humble are lifted up.

Songs are powerful. A few voices coming together in song in late December may seem a small thing in the face of the worries of today, but surely no smaller than those two voices joined in the Judean hill country twenty centuries ago, singing in defiance of the powers of their day. God delights in taking what is insignificant in the eyes of the world to do extraordinary things in unexpected ways. That alone should encourage us to lift our voices and sing in resistance and in hope!

Offering:

We may think what we have to offer God is small, but God works mighty things through the small and unimportant. Let us now bring our offerings to our God, knowing that we will constantly be amazed by what God does through them, and through us.

Prayer of Dedication:

Most High God, for you nothing is impossible. Through a poor young woman in a small town, you gave birth to your realm of endless glory. By your Holy Spirit, bless these gifts so that they may bring your new life and hope to your creation, bearing witness to the promise of your word through Jesus Christ, who has come and is coming again to reign forever and ever. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer:

God of new life, you amaze and transform, you create and make all things new. We come to you with prayers for your world and for your people. Help us, as did Mary, to magnify you as Lord and God of all.

Be the words for the speechless, the silenced, the oppressed, and the persecuted; and loosen our tongues to speak words of truth, justice, and comfort in the right time and place.

Be the might for the weak of hands, the feeble of joints, and the failing of spirit; strengthen us to serve in ways that are kind and generous.

Be comfort and solace for those grieving loss of loved ones, relationships, jobs, and hope. Help us to support, console, and encourage them through their struggles and bring them to God's everlasting joy.

Fill the hungry with good things, refresh the thirsty with living water, restore the impoverished, and stir our homes and communities with your Spirit so that we work for equity and a just sharing of resources for all.

Be new life in places devastated by chaotic waters, winds, and storms; remind us of our responsibilities as stewards of creation.

Bless those who joyfully place their hope in you, those who nurture and receive new life and those who seek your Good News; and in this season of Advent, help us to again see the wideness of your mercy, the depths of your grace, and the expanse of your goodness.

And now we gather our prayers into one voice and pray as Jesus taught… recite the Lord's Prayer together.

Hymn #121: Long ago, prophets knew

Benediction:

My soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.
For the Mighty One has done great things for me. Holy is God's name.
May the love of God fill you until you overflow with joy.
May the coming of the Christ Child free you to live in a world
where the mighty are cast down and the poor are lifted up.
May the Holy Spirit empower you to work for the reign of God on earth.
At Christmas and throughout the year, may you be inspired to share
the Good News of God's peace and love. Amen

This is the fourth and final one in our series of mini-meetings.

Meeting 4: Prayer

Opening Prayer:

ONE: Praise the LORD, my soul;
ALL: all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
ONE: Praise the LORD, my soul,
ALL: and remember all that God does for us.
ONE: The Lord forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases.
ALL: The Lord redeems us and crowns you with love and compassion.
ONE: The Lord satisfies our desires for good things and renews us.
ALL: Praise the Lord. (Adapted from Psalm 103)

Hymn: #638 – Take time to be holy

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:12–28, Ephesians 6:10–20

Read Together:

The Women's Missionary Society is a community of Christians whose purpose, in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ, is to encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service, and fellowship.

Reflection: Prayer

We are a praying church. Our national church produces our Prayer Partnership with daily prayers for our church community in Canada and around the world. As well, our national church website includes prayers for certain days or events that are happening, usually written by the current Moderator of General

Assembly. In addition, many of our churches and WMS groups participate in the Women's Interchurch Council of Canada's World Day of Prayer. I know many of our congregations have a prayer group, and there is a new movement that sees churches committing to 24/7 prayer. I have never been to a WMS meeting where pray has not been a part of the gathering.

The early church was also a church of prayer. In the book of Acts we read that the early church often gathered to pray. Paul told the church in Philippi to pray without ceasing. He gave similar commands to the church in Ephesus, and in the church of the Thessalonians.

Yet, sometimes prayer is hard. Sometimes, I wonder if we believe that prayer is effective. Praying without ceasing seems impossible. Yet, it is a habit worth striving for—a lifelong process. We need to remember that God is always with us and that we need to trust in God for all things.

As we move through our day, a habit of regular prayer is important. Send up short prayers whenever you can. If someone asks for prayer, instead of saying, "I will pray for you later", take a moment to pray for, or even with them, immediately. Perhaps you are on facebook and see a friend's need. Lift a prayer up for them right away and let them know you have prayed for them. Heading into a meeting—pray as you enter the room. Calling a sick friend—pray for them before you pick up the phone. As you pass an accident, pray for those involved and the emergency workers. As you pass a school, pray for the children and staff. Develop a habit of short immediate prayers.

Spending more deliberate time in prayer is also important. Find a time that works for you. Some enjoy their quiet time with God to start their day, while others find

it more meaningful at night. This is a great time to offer thanks, offer your personal concerns, and to pray for God's mission around the world. Prayer and mission are closely linked. Our mission staff are fuelled by the prayers that go out for them. Your prayers for them are known and appreciated—they make a difference.

Your prayers connect you with mission. You may not be able to volunteer at your community food bank, but you can still participate through your prayers. Few of us can travel to Malawi to serve, but we are still involved as we pray for the country of Malawi, and the work that is happening there.

Paul requests prayer for himself as he reaches out to new communities, so always remember your local church in your prayers as well. Pray that your leaders will be fed and inspired. Pray that our congregations will be welcoming communities that will show both boldness and kindness. Pray for one another that we will follow and serve God.

As we look to follow God, we should remember that pray also includes listening. Take time in silence with God and spend time reading the Bible and listening for God's word in them to you.

Like most good things, prayer takes time and discipline. Our good intentions to pray can get sidetracked, but when we truly take the time, amazing things happen. Prayer changes us and this world.

Discussion:

Prayer is so much a part of the Christian faith, that many Christian leaders have spoken about it. Read the following quotes on prayer.

- To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing. ~ Martin Luther King Jr.
- I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me." ~ C.S. Lewis
- Prayer does not mean simply to pour out one's heart. It means rather to find the way to God and to speak with him, whether the heart is full or empty. ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world. ~ Karl Barth
- Prayer is the gift of the Spirit. Often we wonder how to pray, when to pray, and what to pray. We can become very concerned about methods and techniques of prayer. But finally it is not we who pray but the Spirit who prays in us. ~ Henri Nouwen
- I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us and we change things. ~ Mother Teresa

Which one most resonates with you and why?

Offering:

You are the ultimate giver of all things. May we give generously as you have given generously to us.

"To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world." ~ Karl Barth

When I lift up my voice

Hymn #102

Offering Prayer:

Generous God, thank you for our many gifts. Help us to give generously of our finances, our times, and our prayers.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayer:

Consider setting up some prayer stations for this time (instructions included). Alternatively, pray the following prayer.

Loving God,
You hear us when we pray. Take the clutter from our minds as we focus on you.

We pray for our world.

We pray for those areas of the world where there is war and violence. Bring your peace.

We pray for areas of the world where girls and women are oppressed. For those women who are living in fear, provide your safety. Transform these areas so that all your people can live in freedom.

We pray for areas of this earth that are already experiencing climate change. Be with those who are experiencing more frequent drought or storms. Forgive us for being so carefree with this planet and empower us to make concrete changes.

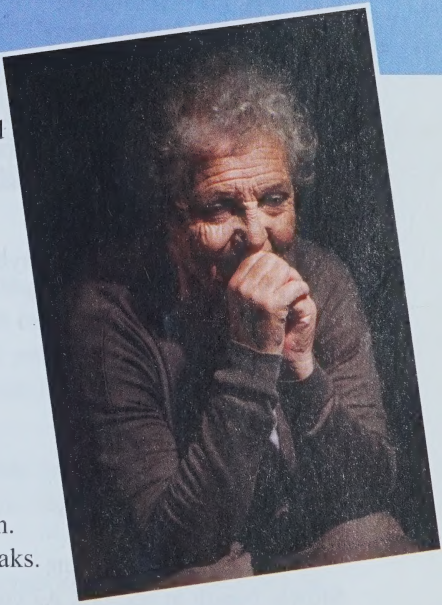
We pray for our mission staff around the world. Energize them in their work. Protect them. Help them to work in partnership with those around them.

We pray for our congregation. Strengthen our leaders. Help them to know how to reach out to those within our community that are searching or hurting. Empower each one of us to reach out with God's love.

Pray for our national WMS during this time of transition. Pray for a vision for the WMS that will continue to see us be involved in local and world

When I lift up my voice, and I cry for your help, and I pour out my troubles before you: I say, "You are my refuge; I will praise your name; you are good to me, O Lord!"

When you come to my side and you answer my prayers and you set my soul free from its prison; I say, "You are my refuge; I will praise your name; you are good to me, O Lord!"



mission through prayer, study, service and fellowship.

In this time of silence, we pray for the concerns of our hearts:

-silence-

Lord, hear our prayers, Amen.

Hymn: #102 – When I lift up my voice

Blessings:

Spend time in prayer, knowing that God listen.
Spend time in silence, knowing the Spirit speaks.
Blessed are those who trust in Him. Amen.

Prayer Stations:

This can be used either to begin your meeting or as your prayer time. Allow members some time to pray using a few of the following prayer stations:

1. **Knot Prayer:**
   Supplies: Shoe laces
   Preparation: Tie 4–5 loose knots in the shoelaces.
   Instruction card: Think of things that are bothering you—tying you up in knots. As you offer these in prayer to God, untie the knots in the lace.
2. **Pray for the World:**
   Supplies: Newspapers
   Instruction card: Take a few moments to look at the newspaper and choose 1–2 items of concern to pray for and 1–2 items to give thanksgiving for. When you have chosen your topics, spend some time in silent prayer for these items.

3. **Gratitude**
   Supplies: Rocks, sharpie markers, a bowl
   Preparation: Place rocks on a table around the bowl.
   Instruction card: Think of 1–2 things you are grateful for. Write that item on a rock and place it in the bowl. Give thanks to God for all those things which your group is thankful for.

4. **Prayer Requests**
   Supplies: Post-it notes and pens
   Preparation: Place post-it notes and pens on a small table be a clear wall.
   Instruction card: Write out a prayer request and post it on the wall. Take a moment to pray for 1–2 requests that are already on the wall.

5. **Breath Prayer**
   Instruction card: A breath prayer is an ancient Christian prayer. Choose a phrase for your breath prayer:
   - Jesus Lives
   - Be Still
   - Know God
   - Lord, have mercy
   - Here I am
   - Come, Lord Jesus
   - Give me Strength
   - Your will, not mine

   Slowly breath in and out. As you inhale, focus on the first half of your prayer. As you exhale, focus on the second half of your prayer. Continue for several minutes as you dwell in God's presence.

6. **Mission Prayers**
   Supplies: Copies of mission staff list and Canadian mission projects

> "I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me."
>
> ~ C.S. Lewis

Instruction Card: Choose to pray for 1-–2 of our PCC international mission staff and their work. Choose to pray for 1–2 of our PCC Canadian mission projects.

PCC International Mission Staff:

Malawi: The Rev. Dr. Blair and Vivian Bertrand
Presbyterians Sharing supports the Rev. Dr. Blair and Ms. Vivian Bertrand as they serve with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in the Synod of Blantyre. Blair's assignment focuses on education and youth ministry. He is working with Zomba Theological College, Theological Education by Extension in Malawi (TEEM), and he is affiliated with the Blantyre Synod youth department. Vivian is working with CARD (Church Action in Relief and Development).

Malawi: The Rev. Joel Sherbino
Presbyterians Sharing supports the Rev. Joel Sherbino as he serves a two-year appointment as part-time Malawi Liaison with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Blantyre Synod. Joel, minister of Paris Presbyterian Church in Paris, Ontario, has a long history with Blantyre Synod.

Japan: David McIntosh
Presbyterians Sharing supports David McIntosh, co-director of the Centre for Minority Issues and Mission (CMIM) in Tokyo, Japan.

Taiwan: Louise Gamble
Louise Gamble has been working with our partner church, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, since 2006 (previously 1965-1973 an 2001-2004). She transcribes and translates reports and correspondence of the Canadian Presbyterian North Formosa (Taiwan) Mission. This includes over 7,000 documents from 1868 to 1923.

Taiwan: The Rev. Dr. Paul McLean
The Rev. Dr. Paul McLean has been serving as a Bible Translation Adviser in partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and the Bible Society in Taiwan since 2012. Currently, he is helping six indigenous translation teams who are preparing Bibles in the Amis, Bunun, Paiwan, Pinuyumayan, Tayal and Tsou languages. The Ngudradrekai (Drekay) Bible was published in July 2017. During 1983-1995 and 2004-2011, Paul helped translate the Bible into Hakka. It was published in 2012.

Hungary: Stephanie Chunoo
Presbyterians Sharing supports Stephanie Chunoo as she serves as a Young Adult Intern with Kalunba Social Services, a refugee ministry of the Reformed

Church of Hungary. Stephanie will be building relationships with the refugee clientele, teaching English and assisting with the English website by providing content to connect international readers.

Pray for our Canadian Ministries:

Action Réfugiés Montréal, Montreal, QC
Action Réfugiés Montréal works with refugees who are seeking justice and safety in the greater Montreal region. ARM's knowledgeable and caring staff understands Canada's complex refugee laws and regulations and knows how to best support people going through the refugee process.

Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre, Montreal, QC
Montreal's Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre offers empowering, supportive programs and services to the community of Little Burgundy in the south-west part of the city and beyond. The center is a presence in the community, accompanying people through their struggles and successes.

Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, Saskatoon, SK
Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry provides a warm and safe place where people in inner-city Saskatoon can gather for food, friendship and support. SNCM reaches out to the Native population through culturally sensitive worship services, a healing circle, and crisis and spiritual counselling. Staff work to assist those who are in need physically, spiritually and emotionally.

Their main goal is to establish a relationship of trust and care with street people so that they may feel comfortable enough to attend a church service that includes with Native traditions; a place they can call home and a people they can call family.

Anamiewigummig (Kenora Fellowship Centre), Kenora, ONT
The Kenora Fellowship Centre provides sanctuary and hospitality for those marginalized and alienated by poverty and addiction. It operates as a drop-in centre and works with legal services, detoxification programs, street patrol and other essential services in the community.

Winnipeg Inner City Missions, Winnipeg, MB
Winnipeg Inner City Missions is committed to serving people with a particular focus on those living in downtown Winnipeg. WICM provides a safe, nurturing and peaceful atmosphere where people can begin to achieve their potential. It is committed to helping people find their way to having adequate food, clothing and a safe place to live. It helps people learn how to be listened to and understood, achieve employment and develop physical, emotional, spiritual and social well-being.

Cariboo Church: Nazko and Area Dakelh Outreach, Cariboo Region, BC
The Nazko and Area Dakelh Outreach is part of the mission work of Cariboo Presbyterian Church in the Dakelh First Nation territory, BC. It is an essential ministry in a region struggling with economic downturn and the ongoing crises of addiction, poverty and despair among many First Nations peoples. It is with the amazing love of Jesus that the ministry team reaches out to the rural and remote people of the Cariboo region.

Hummingbird Ministries, Vancouver, BC
Hummingbird Ministries is an Aboriginal healing ministry located in the lower mainland of BC. It is committed to walking with Indigenous people in their healing journeys and to promote healing and reconciliation between Indigenous people and the Church.

Connecting with our Korean

Sarah Kim and I travelled to Osaka, Japan to meet with women of the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ), who are partners with The Women's Missionary Society in our world-wide sisterhood. The women of the National Christian Women's Association of the Korean Christian Church in Japan were celebrating their 70th Anniversary as a women's organization. Sarah was invited as a panelist for their meeting and I was there to bring greetings from the WMS as a partner in ministry.

Koreans have lived in Japan for hundreds of years and initially arrived for a variety of reasons. People migrated to find work. During the time of Japanese domination of that part of the world, "slaves" were brought to Japan from various parts of Asia—Korean comfort women were brought during the Second World War. Currently, many people whose families originated in Korea have become Japanese citizens by changing their names and giving up their Korean heritage. Some who chose not to do this, suffered ostracism and were the victims of hate crimes. Others, became part of the fabric of the land but were not allowed to be citizens even though they had been born in Japan.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada shares some history with KCCJ having sent missionaries from Canada to assist in the work of the church in Japan. You have probably heard of Beth and Jack McIntosh, Joyce and Glen Davis, Priscilla and Bob Anderson, and many more. These

Friends Living in Japan

by Janet Brewer

men and women ministered to the Koreans in Japan in various ways. Their work along with that of others are featured in a Korean museum in Etobicoke, ON where pictures and stories of the history of mission work in Korea and Japan are highlighted.

The WMS connection has continued and been nurtured in recent years with exchange visits in both countries, and invitations to the women of the KCCJ to the National Women's Gathering in Richmond Hill, ON every three years. Our visit was to help cement this ongoing relationship and to spend time with the women.

I was privileged to be part of their women's gathering. I don't speak Korean or Japanese so some translation was required! Thankfully, David McIntosh was with us and provided ongoing assistance.

When our time with the women of the KCCJ was finished, we travelled to Tokyo to visit the Centre for Minority Issues and Mission. David McIntosh is the co-director of this centre and his position is funded by The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the United Church of Canada. David gladly showed us the work that is being done. He works with ecumenical and civil society partners to combat racism particularly against people of Chinese and Korean heritage in Japan and he advocates for improvements to legal and administrative supports for vulnerable minorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to travel to Japan and to share this experience with you.

Mission In Action

The Cariboo Presbyterian Church
Changes afoot in the Cariboo

by Jon Wyminga

It is late August as I write and changes are in the air. I tried to sit outside for my prayer time this morning, but it was just a tad too cold that early. A few people have told me they have even seen frost lately. I'm just starting to notice the aspen leaves changing colour. All these are messengers that we have begun the transition from Summer into Fall. In the next few months, I'll be replenishing my firewood supply and the ranchers we know are desperately trying to get their hay crop in. They would have done it earlier but our rainy summer has hindered their progress. On the up side the rain has meant we haven't had to worry about forest fires this summer—at least not locally. The situation in the Amazon rainforest is much more distressing, I know.

Changing seasons mean that children, as well as college and university students, are all heading back to school and many churches are moving into their Fall activities. Here in the Cariboo House Church Mission we will be facing some transitions of our own. Bruce Wilcox, our full-time Lay Missionary will be retiring at the end of January. After leading most of our southern house churches for six and a half years, he and his wife Jackie are looking forward to a much-deserved rest.

We look forward to having Mark Carter join us, along with his wife Alicia and their newborn son Micah. Mark was a part of our McLeese Lake House Church for many years before he heard God's call to full-time ministry and began his studies in Vancouver. After a very careful and prayerful discernment process, we invited him and his family to serve the Lord among us. They are planning to join us at the beginning of October so Mark and Bruce can work together for four months to facilitate the transition. It will mean for some extra challenges and opportunities before the end of the year but, truth be told, we've faced these kinds of challenges before. Dave and Linda Webber had served in this mission for 25 years. Before they retired five years ago, we had a transition period when we brought Bruce on.

Even though we've already been through this it still takes more than a little preparation and a significant step of faith in the Lord. There will be added expenses to support an additional missionary for four months and the additional costs of moving the Carter family from Vancouver. This will involve an increase in our financial needs of almost $25,000 in those four months. We're trusting in the Lord who has always provided through our faithful members, friends, and supporters. We would appreciate you keeping these needs in your thoughts and prayers.

As we face many transitions, and as many of you across the land face your own, I am reminded of the many challenges the early church faced in the few years after Jesus died and was raised again, such as:

- the 50-day wait in Jerusalem for Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4)
- the Spirit's coming, which launched the church into mission and ministry (Acts 2)
- the appointment of seven people to administer food distribution and alleviate the increasing demands on the apostles (Acts 6:16)
- the persecution against the church in Jerusalem that forced all but the apostles to leave the city (Acts 8:1)
- the Gentiles who receive the message of Jesus and thus challenged the whole church to rethink its approach to the Law of Moses (Acts10:1–11:18; 15:1–35).
- mission and churches being established outside of Jerusalem in Samaria (Acts 8:4–40), Damascus (Acts 9:10–22) and Antioch (Acts 11:19–30)
- the appointment of missionaries to bring the message of Jesus even further afield to Turkey (Asia Minor) (Acts 13:1–3ff)
- the call of those missionaries to reach out even further to Europe (Macedonia) (Acts 16:6–10ff).
- the arrest and imprisonment of some and their extensive ministry while in chains (Acts 4:1–31; 5:17–42; 6:8–8:1; 12:1–19; 16:6–40; 21:27–28:31).

Each of these situations presented significant challenges, many of which more difficult than any challenge I have ever had to face. In each case, the followers of Jesus trusted the Lord. And in each case, the Lord proved more than worthy of that trust. So, as we face our transitions and you face yours, I encourage us all to put our trust in the Lord, "who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20).

Trust in the LORD with all your
heart,
And do not rely on your own
insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
And he will make straight your
paths. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

From *Northern Light: The Official Newsletter of The Cariboo Presbyterian Church, (Jon Wyminga Fall Edition, 2019)*

Presbyterial

Sometimes it takes experience in order to see more clearly and develop greater awareness. When it comes to the nation to nation relationships between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Canada, The Kairos Blanket exercise is a helpful tool to build awareness and understanding.

On May 11, Essex-Kent Presbyterial hosted the Blanket Exercise for area churches at Knox Leamington Presbyterian Church. Facilitators Allyson Carr from Justice Ministries of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and Henrietta Thompson of the Anglican Church walked participants through the Blanket Exercise. As well, Shirley Johnson of Caldwell First Nation welcomed us, shared her teaching, and led us in a talking circle.

During the exercise, blankets are arranged on the floor to represent the land. Facilitators invite participants to step onto these blankets and into the role of First Nations, Inuit, and later Métis peoples. Participants are asked to read scrolls and carry cards that determine their outcome as people on the land. As facilitators pull back and remove blankets guiding participants through a historical time it becomes abundantly clear how the colonization of this land impacts those who were here long before settlers arrived.

It's an experience that engages mind and heart as it seeks to educate and help build understanding. The whole experience helps participants to clearly see why the relationship between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples is often broken and how we might act together to bring healing and reconciliation.

Schools, churches, businesses, and governments across this land have all used The Kairos Blanket exercise as tool to build relationships of trust and respect. Think of it as the history lesson you never learned in school.

Our next step is to have a training session to learn how to lead the Blanket Exercise and then we can share it with congregations.

Local

South Kinloss WMS supports Momma Hope in Kisumu, Africa

One of our young church members, Erin Gilchrist, has worked as a volunteer helping this mission get access to water and supporting the orphanage. She is now employed with this organization and travels to different areas to check on projects.

Following, is an exert from a letter she sent to thank the WMS ladies for raising money to buy an interlocking sewing machine for the tailoring shop.

Dear South Kinloss WMS,

I wanted to take a moment to extend my enormous gratitude to all of you for the love, energy, and financial resources that you put into purchasing an overlock machine for the OLPS Margaret Mowbray Tailoring Shop in Kisumu, Kenya. This machine will go a long way in extending the services OLPS is able to offer at its tailoring shop, which will also help them attract more business and earn more money to support all the wonderful little humans at the Kisumu Children's Rescue Center. Your generosity amazes me and I feel so proud to be connected to a group of such wonderful women. I'll be visiting our partners in Kisumu in a couple weeks and I'll be sure to share a photo of the overlock machine in use when I'm there!

We recently hosted our Annual Partners Conference for all of the community-led organizations Mama Hope works with across Africa. During one of the sessions, participants were encouraged to share three of their organizations' biggest achievements over the past year. When Erick Aluru, Programs Manager at OLPS, stood up, one of the three achievements he shared was securing the overlock machine. OLPS has had a lot of big accomplishments this year, and hearing that he counts this among the top three was so heartwarming and speaks volumes about the impact this overlock machine will have on the tailoring shop, on OLPS, and most importantly on the people they serve.

I am always thrilled with projects like these that put resources in the hands of community leaders so they can grow their work. By investing in the tailoring shop, you're investing in local ownership over resources. You're investing in OLPS' ability to determine the path forward for members of their own community.

When we have more than we need, the greatest thing we can do is to lend a hand to those who, by no fault of their own, were not born into an abundance of resources. I see the WMS as a ray of hope—building a bridge where there is a divide; linking arms with our brothers and sisters across the globe; and providing an example of what humanity should be.

I pray for God's abundant blessings on each one of you.

Erin

Memorial

Rev. Joyce Davis

The family of the Rev. Joyce Davis sadly announces her passing on Friday, October 4, 2019, at Cape Breton Regional Hospital, after suffering a stroke.

Joyce lived out her faith through devoted service and boundless love all her life. With her husband, Glen, she ventured into ministry with the Korean Christian Church in Japan for 15 years. After serving the Presbyterian Church in Canada overseas, she worked as a diaconal minister and then as an ordained minister in Toronto. In her “retirement” she served the Vancouver School of Theology as Director of Field Education, while writing a history of the Order of Diaconal Ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, From the Bottom Up. Joyce never stopped learning, growing and sharing her gifts. Her love and devotion for diverse and marginalized people was exemplified in her welcoming young people into her home and her life.

Joyce was deeply involved in the WMS and was recently in attendance at the Western Women’s Gathering.

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She is survived by her husband, Rev. Dr. Glen Davis; sons, Rev. Bruce (Karen), Vancouver and Mark (Christine), Burnaby; daughter, Paska Otto Orach, St. Johns, NL; grandchildren, Luke, Aoife, Sarah, Joshua, Faith, Daniel and Myriam; and brother, Bruce (Georgette), Ottawa.

We are deeply grateful for the compassionate care Joyce received in the ICU and Palliative Care unit of CB Regional Hospital, and for the supportive prayers and visits from her church community and friends.

Alexandra (Sandra) Barker

Alexandra (Sandra) Barker passed away peacefully with her loving family by her side at Grey Bruce Health Services, Owen Sound on July 25, 2019 at the age of 84. Beloved wife of the late Rev. Kenneth Barker for 57 years. Loving mother of three daughters and a grandmother of five.

She received her post-secondary education at Ewart College, the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School in Toronto, where she met Kenneth Barker and they became life-long partners in marriage and ministry.

Sandra was actively involved in the church; Christian Education, Bible Study groups, WMS, UCW, Prayer Chains, and as an Elder. She served as president of St Andrew's WMS and Bruce Grey WMS Presbyterial. She attended many of the National Presbyterian Women's Gatherings.

Sandra had many interests and involvements outside the church. She worked part time as a Nursery School Teacher while in Ste. Anne de Bellevue and as a Historical Guide at Grey County Museum in Owen Sound. She was a faithful volunteer at Grey Bruce Health Services Hospital in Owen Sound.

She was actively involved in Orillia and Owen Sound Scottish Country Dance Groups, Quilting Groups, weaving, and knitting and sewing many hundreds of newborn kits for Central Mennonite Committee (MCC).

Sandra will be remembered in love by all, for her service, dedication and ministry to all who had the privilege of knowing her and experiencing her love for others.

Remembering

Beth MacIntyre
Community Presbyterian
Church
Almonte ON

Mary Hendry
Erskine Presbyterian
Church
Dundalk ON

Betty Schieman
Burns Presbyterian
Church, Mosa
Glencoe, ON

National Presbyterian Women's Gathering

Through the Waters

DATE: May 15–18, 2020

PLACE: Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Richmond Hill, Ontario

REGISTRATION FEES: **$395** before November 30, 2019
$475 after November 30, 2019 and before March 31, 2020

INQUIRIES: womensgathering@presbyterian.ca
416-441-1111 or 800-619-7301

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT womensgathering.ca

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